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SINGLETON FONTENOY, R.N.

BY JAMES HANNAY,

(LATE OF HER MAJESTY'S NAVY.)

AUTHOR OF "SKETCHES IN ULTRA-MARINE," ETC.

Employons à nous rendre bons et heureux le temps qu'ils perdent à chercher comment on doit l'être, et proposons-nous de grands exemples à imiter plutôt que de vains systèmes à suivre.

J'ai toujours cru que le bon n'était que le beau mis en action.

ROUSSEAU.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

JOSEPH ARCHER CROWE, ESQ.,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED,

IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MUCH KINDNESS,

AND

AS A TESTIMONY OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP.

J. H.

Gen. Res. Div. 20951 Heywood 230

SINGLETON FONTENOY, R.N.

Book II.

THE DREAMER.

Often we would condole over the hard destiny of the young in this era : how after all our toil, we were to be turned out into the world * * * * no existing thing that we were trained to Act on, nothing that we could so much as Believe.

THOMAS CARLYLE'S "Sartor Resartus," p. 137.



SINGLETON FONTENOY, R.N.

CHAPTER I.

Malheur à qui du fond de l'exil de la vie,
Entendit ces concerts d'un monde qu'il envie,
Du nectar idéal sitôt qu'elle a goûté,
La nature répugne à la réalité.

LAMARTINE.

OUR story opens in a quiet and solemn chamber—the library of a country house, in one of the northern counties of England. The time is the close of the year 183—. The mellow sunlight of an autumn morning floats, with a colour like old gold, into the room, touches up, as it were with the hand of a master, a portrait by somebody who knew how to make sallowness sublime, illuminates the vellum, and adorns the calf.

Into this apartment there walked, on the morning in question, a man apparently about thirty-five years of age. He was dressed in black clothes, imperfectly brushed, and a white neckcloth, clumsily put on. His face was at once coarse and thoughtful; his manner awkwardly dignified; his eyes were grey and very vivid, but had a vacant kind of look occasionally, from his habit of mental abstraction. As he walked you became aware of a slight deficiency in his gait.

“Mr. Trochee—the Reader!”

“The Reader—Mr. Trochee!”

Having duly introduced him, I may add that he appeared in this library as tutor to the family of Mr. Fontenoy of Heatherby, which at this time consisted only of one son, a youth still in his teens. Mr. Trochee was what Dr. Johnson called a “sound, sullen scholar,” and sprang from a genealogical tree which might fairly be called a tree of knowledge, from the number of pedagogues it had produced. He had a clear head, and no inconsiderable command of that old-fashioned catapult kind of sarcasm so much in vogue

during the last century. He was indeed exemplary in his way; and if you had asked him what *religio* was, he would have replied at once that it was a choriambus!*

He now found the library empty, but he established himself very comfortably at the table with some "scribbling paper" and a book, and in a short time was in the land of day-dreams.

A small door opened noiselessly at a corner of the room, opposite to the side at which he had entered. He did not look up, and consequently did not see the figure which glided in—that of a youth just growing out of boyhood—a youth somewhat "tall for his age," and certainly handsome for any age. Singleton Charles Fontenoy had a slim, graceful figure, pleasing in movement, and elegant in repose, which somehow reminded you of a Persian greyhound. His features were classically handsome, and rather dark; but this last effect was agreeably relieved by blue eyes, which contrasted pleasantly with his very black curly hair and eyebrows.

* *Viz.* thus scanned—*Rēlīgīō*: apparently all some learned men know about it.

The countenance seemed fitted to express courage and decision, but there lingered upon it that shyness which usually accompanies premature thought and early earnestness; which indeed is but the expression of the confusion of that Eve the soul when it begins to be conscious of its exposure in a strange world, and which Rochefoucauld pronounces preferable to the easy assurance of modish young men.

Singleton, almost immediately on his entry, took hold of the light ladder which rested against the shelves, to the upper of which it was intended to give access (it was a true Jacob's ladder to him), and proceeded to adjust it with an obvious design on a burly quarto.

As he placed his foot on the lowest step, he glanced round at Mr. Trochee with a curious expression half inquiring, and half contemptuous. The tutor's eyes were fixed immoveably on his book. Singleton moved upwards to grasp the object of his desires. He had placed the ladder rather carelessly, and ascended it so also,—when—unhappy type of

the fate of many seekers after knowledge!— he slipped and fell. The quarto, clutched with eager hand at the moment, thundered down after him, inflicting as it did so, a slight graze on his right temple.

Singleton burst into a loud laugh as he sprung to his feet, and standing upright met the glance of the astonished tutor, scared by the unwonted noise.

“It’s really very odd,” said Mr. Trochee, peevishly, “that every thing you do, appears to be accompanied by a disturbance!”

“Very,” said the boy, pouting with his fine lip in a sulky manner. Mr. Trochee rose and placed the ladder in what he emphatically called “its proper place.”

“Knocking the books about,” he continued, while Singleton rubbed his forehead with a white pocket handkerchief, diffusing as he did so an odour of violets which more and more irritated our scholastic friend, who would willingly have handed over all who used perfumes to the prosecution of the Sanitary Commission,—“neglecting your proper studies to run after works with which you have no

business!—where are your Latin hexameters? where is your Greek prose?”

The youth made no answer, but the dark pupils of his blue eyes distended, and his breathing grew short and quick. He continued to rub his forehead.

“Come, come,” said Mr. Trochee, “your head stood it pretty well, I have no doubt! Let us get to work.”

“I tell you what,” said Singleton, drawing himself up, with an air of weariness and anger, “I am tired of this—tired of reading and hearing about what I do not admire or love; tired of pedantry, and sick of being haunted by the ghosts of the dead from day to day. I am tired of a process of study which can only be compared to that whim of Byron’s—drinking out of a skull!”

Mr. Trochee opened his mouth in astonishment.

“None of *your* darling ideas seem to be governing mankind,” added the youth.

“Go on, Scaliger,” cried Mr. Trochee. (This was his notion of irony.)

“I wonder at the coolness with which you

can hunt out words in a dictionary," pursued Singleton, "when you know the state of the poor in this very county."

"Bravo, Scioppius! My dear boy," said the tutor, compassionately, "I see that you have been led away by the popular vagaries of the day. All the evils which provoke your learned indignation are attributable to one simple cause.—But here's your father."

In came, as he spoke, a tall and rather stout gentleman, between forty and fifty years of age, dressed in a flowing morning gown, and looking very magnificent about the throat. His manner combined the serenity of middle age with the dignity of a county magistrate! He bowed [graciously to Mr. Trochee and his son. He usually, indeed, treated his son with much deference; not on the score of that youth's own merits, but because he was *his* son. But Mr. Fontenoy demands a few lines of description. His was a character which, belonging to a common enough class, must yet be repeatedly illustrated till it is thoroughly understood.

Mr. Fontenoy thought religion—'twas his

highest conception of it—a useful engine of state. In his own life, instead of a blessing to himself, it was used rather as a means of annoying other people.

Mr. Fontenoy went to church—and, at the name of his Redeemer, bowed—*à la Talleyrand!*

Mr. Fontenoy would attend the funeral of one of his tenants with all the pomp of yeomanry, and having had an imposing salute fired over his grave, to-day, would put an execution in the house of his widow to-morrow.

Mr. Fontenoy preserved his game most rigidly. However, we shall see more of him as we go on.

“You were saying something, I think?” he asked Mr. Trochee.

“I was just telling your son, sir, that all the evils of Europe”—Mr. Fontenoy drew himself up, with a judicial air—“are attributable to one cause,—the intrusion into political life of *half-read men*.” This was Mr. Trochee’s favourite term of contempt, and one which he frequently launched at the

heads of the agitators of the neighbouring town of Huskdale, where there is a great manufactory of cotton and charges against the Established Church. The calm and vast simplicity of the proposition duly impressed Mr. Fontenoy; he glanced at his son, who bit his lips, and said nothing.

“What gave rise to the conversation?”

“I am afraid Singleton has been acquiring some crude notions,” answered Trochee. At that moment, a short, sharp shower pattered against the windows, a few fitful gusts of wind whirled past the leaves as they were driven from the trees to a violent death. Mr. Fontenoy rushed to look out, feeling a pang of terror about the greenhouse, and after exclaiming, with an air of importance “this will try Peel’s Currency Bill!”—a dictum perfectly unintelligible to Singleton—left the room.

All this time, the quarto which had fallen, had been reposing tranquilly on the floor. Mr. Trochee now picked it up, and proceeded to look at the title page.

“Why, what is this?” he asked, angrily.
“What are you doing with this?”

Singleton blushed, looked confused, and muttered something about “both sides of the question.”

“Sir,” said Mr. Trochee, “you are too young yet for such writers as Bolingbroke!”

When the son of a landed proprietor begins to read Bolingbroke, and talk about the poor, it is quite clear that something desperate must be done. Mr. Trochee had a long secret consultation with Mr. Fontenoy that evening. “I will send him to school,” said his parent. To check a tendency towards intellectual speculation, what could have been better? It was resolved upon. Mr. Trochee received a handsome and honourable dismissal soon after, and proceeded to London. He found himself thoroughly tired of teaching people, and therefore set up as a writer for the — Review, by doing which, he effectually secured himself from the possibility of instructing anybody!

And Singleton meanwhile stayed at home, and read whatever he liked, while his father

was looking out for an appropriate school. The blue eyes were dim with poring over black and white. Singleton was just then in an intellectual crisis. He had begun to doubt the infallibility of Paley, and had not yet met with the writings of Carlyle!

CHAPTER II.

. . . . Rarum hoc in adolescentibus nostris : nam quotusquisque vel ætati alterius vel auctoritati, ut minor, cedit? Statim sapiunt ; statim sciunt omnia : neminem verentur ; imitantur neminem ; atque ipsi sibi exempla sunt !

PLINY THE YOUNGER, Ep. viii. 23.

. . . . Rare this in our young men : for how often does any one of them yield either to the age or the authority of another, as his junior? They grow wise, at once : know everything at once : reverence nobody, imitate nobody ; and are, themselves, their own models !

THE Lepels had arrived! The Lepels were at Dunreddin! The Lepels were going to give a ball! Such was the news which Mr. Fontenoy's county welcomed with enthusiasm. Such, too, opens the prospect of a lively chap-

ter to the author, entertaining a natural dread of the growing number of readers, who, the moment they come to the word *Virtue*, skip; who only patronise writers who convey heartlessness in epigrams, as Hannibal carried poison in a brilliant ring.

The Lepels had been a long time abroad, and were now about to settle down permanently in their family mansion,—one of those imposing structures, combining the dignity of age with the grace of colour, which take their name from Queen Elizabeth. When you gazed at it, from the broad plains, shaded with noble trees, in which it was situated—when your eye rested on its stately elevation, and the proud escutcheon graven in front—the antique windows—the raised terrace, bounded by the graceful balustrade—you even wondered how people could leave it for a palace on the Grand Canal or a villa on the Bay of Naples. Probably Mr. Lepel's lawyers could have enlightened you on the point; but at this time all was right with the family. The estates were not more encumbered than was sufficient to show that the family had

made good alliances. All this was very agreeable to Mr. Fontenoy, their neighbour. A link of relationship had joined, in a past age, the two houses, in a way near enough to be interesting, and Mr. Fontenoy and Mr. Lepel had been intimate associates in their youth.

Singleton was at the ball, although some very good judges thought it wrong that so mere a boy should "go out." But this was not the opinion of all; for those who looked at him saw that he was handsome, and those who talked to him found that he was clever. Little Miss Pierrepont—whom the young Lepel who was a wit used to call Sweet P.—pronounced him quite a man, asked him why he never came over to Pierrepont, and said that Heatherby was a very pretty place. So, indeed, it was; and perhaps that young lady thought upon the subject more than she spoke. Singleton was pleased, shy, confused, and dreamy, perhaps a little sad. He saw all the county people, of whose titles and places he had so often heard before. Mr. Lepel, wishing to ascertain if he had "am-

bition," asked him if he would like to have a commission in the Yeomanry! Then he danced with Augusta Lepel, a girl who had brought away from Italy, in her own person, a face by Guido and a figure by Correggio; whose tall form undulated gracefully as she moved, like a palm branch carried in a sacred procession, and whose fine forehead and cheeks seemed to be always blushing, as if they were ashamed of being so pretty! Her eyes watched him, as he left her and sauntered down the room, and engaged in conversation with some young gentlemen from Oxford. They had been there to "finish their education!" Poor boys! They did not know that they had not begun it!

Singleton was leaning at one side of the room by himself, in a fit of meditation, watched by a dumpy little girl who wondered why he did not ask her to dance. A youth approached him, in whom he recognized the young Lepel to whom he had been introduced. He had just come of age, and was of rather striking appearance. His features were sharp and of great mobility, expressive of the most decided

sagacity and energy ; and his forehead somewhat remarkable by the prominence of the ridge over the eyes, which phrenologists pronounce an evidence of the strength of the perceptive faculties. Singleton could not help thinking it a pity that so good a face should be spoiled by spectacles. He would have been surprised if he had known why they were worn. Lepel was a youth of ambition, and there were many peculiarities about him which his friends were a long time in learning to understand. He now commenced a brisk conversation with Singleton, and struck out some rapid, lively sketches of the life which he had seen on the Continent. He was very entertaining and agreeable, partly from his keen and playful satire, partly from his ingenious flattery. This last was original ; he would praise a beauty for her wit, and a genius for his beauty.

“ You will devote yourself now to England, I suppose, and begin your career ? ” said Singleton.

“ Career ! oh yes, I suppose so ! but what is an unpretending man to do, now-a-days ? ”

“ Politics ? ”

“ Ah ! I should be out of place in such matters !”

“ What is in its place, now, I should like to know ?” asked Singleton, with a yawn.

“ Nothing,” replied Lepel, sharply. “ This is a manufacturing country, with agricultural institutions.”

“ A neat phrase for an address to the Electors of Huskdale,” his companion said, with a smile.

Lepel laughed, and was very friendly. “ We must see a good deal of each other, my dear Singleton,” he said, looking very intently in his face, and he had a way of doing this which was a flattery in itself. Then he suddenly seized him by the arm. “ Look here, my boy !”

“ Who ? what ?”

“ Hush ! Colonel Bray, knew him at Paris, on a visit in the neighbourhood. My dear Colonel !” cried the quick Lepel. They were joined at that moment by two people, Colonel Bray and his wife, who marched towards them. The Colonel was a tall, military looking man, with a large mouth and a narrow, retreating

forehead. He had an appearance of decided weakness. Some people would have thought it ridiculous: to Singleton, it was painful, for his organization was of a character which entered into acute and intense sympathy with everything and everybody. Where the mass of people laughed at a person, Singleton suffered for him. This temperament gave him great quickness, but at the cost of great pain. The Colonel came grinning up with his wife on his arm. She was a great deal younger than him; a clever-looking, dark complexioned little woman, with very black hair, and full, purple mouth. She was certainly pretty, but disagreeably pretty, at least, Fontenoy thought so. Whether it was a certain sensuality in her face, that conveyed the idea of ripeness without bloom, or not,—he could not analyse the impression at the instant;—but certainly, he shrunk from her black eyes, decidedly, if indefinitely. Her husband came grinning up, as I said, to the two youths, and Singleton fancied that the wife blushed, as if annoyed and ashamed. Singleton was morbidly acute, as I have hinted, and he fancied again, that

that there was something peculiar in that blush, and that it was excited by a glance of Lepel's.

"Ah! Colonel," said Lepel, "glad to see you. We're going to have a great review of the Yeomanry soon—national defences, eh?"

"National defences" was the poor Colonel's hobby. His was the vast mind which started the "Anti-Julius-Cæsarism Society,"—a body organized for the purpose of arming everybody, for fear we should be destroyed for ever, *if* our continental friends equipped a tremendous army—*if* they maintained it—*if* they could get ships for it—*if* it crossed the Channel—*if* we had no navy—*if* there were no gales—*if*, &c. &c.

Lepel introduced Fontenoy, and added that he was interested in the subject. And then he led off the Colonel's wife to dance; and it seemed to Singleton that there was a certain air of sarcasm which might have been spared in his manner, and that the couple looked back with a certain air of gay triumph at them, as they walked off.

On went the dance—grace keeping time

with melody, as the body with the soul. Singleton gazed upon that brilliant company, and sighed ; and there was poetry in that sigh. Ah ! if the moon's rays had but souls, what melancholy would they feel, in some scenes where they shine the brightest. Happy rays that have no soul !

Half the world think they have acquired manner when they have learned to bore each other with politeness. But to be bored, and bear it with grace,—that is a rare accomplishment ! Few people could tolerate the Colonel—Singleton charmed him. He was so earnest and so kindly, listened so patiently, understood him so well ! Only once or twice his eyes wandered away to young Lepel and his partner. How her eyes sparkled, and what a flush !

On went the dance :—it was over. The Colonel insisted upon taking Singleton to Mrs. Bray : she was so fond of clever young men ! Singleton was left alone with her, for Lepel had moved away. He began to feel that there was a strange fascination about her. He had lost his fluency of speech, and scarcely knew

what to say. He noticed that she had a bouquet which he had not seen in her hand before.

“A pretty bouquet that,” Singleton said, innocently.

The lady made a gesture ; the bouquet fell —out popped a note !

Singleton’s hand was on it in an instant, to hide it. The lady gave a little, faint, timorous cry, and fainted back on the bench. In an instant there was a crowd round them — “What’s the matter ? How did it happen ?” —and a great rush.

Singleton’s nature seemed to have shot into full growth in that instant. “Stand back !” he cried, almost fiercely, to the pressing mob. “Air !” He seized a smelling bottle. The lady was revived by the powerful salts ; she opened her eyes, and seemed as if she would have spoken. By an impulse, Singleton squeezed her hand hard. Thanks to the cruelty, she said nothing, and in another moment she recovered herself.

“Oh dear !” cried the Colonel, who had come up at the disturbance. “My carriage

my carriage!" he kept saying vaguely to people round about him.

Lepel was soon there, with an unwonted flush on his cheeks. The Colonel led away his wife, who fixed her eyes on Singleton, as she bowed good night to him, with an expression which he long remembered. Away went the Colonel, so anxious about the defence of the nation—so careless of himself!

The guests were preparing to go, and Singleton was agitated and thoughtful. And then, he had concealed the note!

Lepel came up to him.

"You are to stay here to-night, Singleton," he said, in a friendly, and rather excited tone.

"How so?"

"Oh! it's all right—do. Your father has gone. They will send you whatever things you want from Heatherby in the morning."

"Very well—you're very kind," Fontenoy answered. He knew what this meant, and he marked Lepel's agitation.

They ascended the stairs to his private rooms; there was a very comfortable fire burning there. Frederick (that was his

Christian name) lighted a lamp, and began to talk lightly away, to put himself at his ease.

“A regular Tusculum—eh, Singleton? See—what a meerschau! This belonged to a poor fellow I knew at Bonn—a great Radical. He’s in Spielberg now. Here are my books. Horace, you see: I like him. Gentlemen read Horace! By the bye, how do *you* render *simplex munditiis*? Quite untranslatable, isn’t it?” And he went on, turning over books and pamphlets very nervously and rapidly. “Here’s the best novel in the English language, ‘Tristram Shandy,’—a copy with Sterne’s autograph in it. Fine bold sharp hand he wrote, didn’t he?” Then he ran off a few of Shelley’s lines:—

Arethusa arose

From her fountain of snows,—

and came to a dead stop. Singleton was nervous, silent, and embarrassed.

“That was a strange affair,” Lepel began, looking up into Fontenoy’s eyes, in his peculiar way.

Fontenoy’s eyes dropped.

“It was lucky you were the person it

happened to. You are young, but wise." Fontenoy remained silent.

"It may be talked about. People *will* ask questions, but men of the world know how to deal with them. They know how to answer!"

"Not how to lie!" said Singleton, drawing himself up proudly.

Lepel's pale face flushed. "Nobody lies, of course. At least, nobody allows any one to tell him so!—This pure world," he added, with a bitter sneer, "makes the distinction, and dubs it Honour!"

"Lepel," said Singleton, "let us be candid with one another. I have discovered a secret of yours, in a most painful way. But I have nothing to do with it, but to regret and forget it. I am no moralist, I am sorry to say, but I love virtue as I love flowers, or a blue sky. It is sweeter to see, and purer to mix with.—Come, come," added Fontenoy, smiling kindly, and looking very pleasing, as he deserved to do, from his good intentions,—“behold a juvenile Mentor! Let us devote this little white creature to the infernal gods!”—Here,

he pulled out the fatal note. "Let us put it in the fire!"

Lepel started, as he saw it,—then laughed. "Be it so! You are my good Genius."

They dropped the note into the flames, where it perished in an instant.

"So dies a martyr!" said Lepel, gaily.—And they dropped the subject.

Lepel then rang the bell, and with the promptitude of the slaves of the lamp, a servant brought up some supper, and at this very late banquet, they were joined by some Oxonians who were guests at the house. There was a lively gentleman from Exeter, a dandy from Christ Church, and two speculative youths from Oriel.

"This is the eve of St. Kilderkin," said Bones, of Oriel.

"Indeed," said Lepel, "what did he do?"

"He built an abbey."

"Did he pay for it?" asked Lepel.

"This is an age without Faith," said Bones, opening a pie.

"And without the divine element, at all,"

said his fellow-student of Oriel, pouring out some hock.

Fontenoy looked curiously up. Something of this sort had floated through his serious mind, at times. He had begun to feel the want of the age;—a sense of loneliness in life's journey had visited him occasionally. He turned to Mr. Bones.

“You express ideas, I have sometimes thought of,” he said. “This absence of Faith—do you think it merely temporary, or the natural result of the exhaustion of traditions, and the prelude to a new organization of spirituality?”

“Exhaustion of traditions!” exclaimed Bones, pausing horrified, in the dissection of a partridge, and holding the entire bird on his fork, suspended in air.—“God bless me! Read St. Kilderkin, born A.D. 960, died A.D. 1019! We have published him in ten folio volumes.”—Here Bones made a motion to cross himself, and the bird tumbled on his plate.

“Hang all mysticism,” said the Christ Church man, comprehensively. “Stick to the

good old school. I'm for our regular institutions, and God save the King!"

"Science has destroyed credulity," said Lepel, "and reason has put down fanaticism. Organise labour and increase production, and let those who want 'spirituality' pay for it, if they like."

The time-piece on the mantel-piece struck five.

CHAPTER III.

. . . Who knows not Circe ?

COMUS.

It was the evening after the ball. Singleton was sauntering down the main street of Huskdale. He had ridden over on a mission from Miss Lepel, who wanted some tickets for a sacred concert. Huskdale is a manufacturing town, but it combines the most opposite characteristics, and may be said to be in a state of permanent civil war. It returns one Chartist and one Protectionist to Parliament; it has a high and dry rector, and an Anti-State-Church Association; it has a Mechanics' Institute, and an Archery Club; it has a

church with an organ and a painting, and a common for a field congregation. It ought to have a temple of Janus, and most assuredly, if it had, its doors would never be closed !

It was within an hour of sunset, and the chill breezes of the twilight time were beginning to creep about. Troops of little factory girls were hastening from their dreary prisons to their dreary homes, divided into knots and twining their arms round each other's necks, in unconscious imitation of the wild flowers which they never see ! The bells of one or two chapels were noisily beating the air. Singleton enjoyed all that he saw, as he went along, and swung about in his hand a big bunch of the last roses of the year, which he had bought for the purpose of scenting some of his favourite books with the leaves.

He had turned round a corner, and was proceeding towards the inn, where he had put up his pony, when he heard a sharp tapping against a window which made him involuntarily start suddenly and look round, (for he mused rather absently as he walked, after the manner of idealists in general,) but not seeing

what had caused it, he marched forward again. He had, perhaps, gone another hundred yards, when a figure came running up behind him. Turning round, a young girl almost ran against him; her bonnet had fallen back, her hair was dishevelled, her cheeks flushed. Our young friend was embarrassed.

In the presence of Cleopatra, Singleton would have been easy and graceful; in the presence of the young lady's-maid, who now spoke to him, he was awkward and shy.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the damsel, growing more confused in her turn (she did not expect to find him so good-looking), "my mistress wishes to see you."

"Who?"

"A friend of yours, sir," she said. There was something very modest in her manner; so Singleton intimated that he would attend her. Otherwise, he abominated intrigue, and everything that had the look of it.

They stopped at the door of a handsome enough house. He went up stairs to the drawing-room, and found there—Mrs. Colonel Bray!

She was sitting upon a sofa as he came in, and rose up to receive him as the door closed. There was a slight agitation in her manner which was very graceful. Singleton bowed. He began again to feel the fascination of her presence. The air seemed warmer in it!

“What must you think of me?” she said, in a pretty little tremor, and with a slightly foreign accent, which Fontenoy had not before noticed. “How kind you were! What tact, what grace you showed!” Here she clasped her little white hands together in an oratorical manner. “You so young, too! It was genius! It was inspiration!”

Singleton did not entertain so high an opinion of his last night's exploit, and he could not help smiling. The fair Circe (such was her classic name) was wonderfully put at her ease by it. She continued, “I am very unhappy! We women are sacrificed by a false society. They sell us, and violate nature's harmonies. The fair ought to be given only to the young!” Here Circe looked tenderly at Singleton and adjusted her heavy black hair. Singleton was modest, virtuous,

and high principled ; he was also young, and “tall for his age.”

Just then there was a great noise on the stairs. “*Oh, ciel,*” exclaimed Circe ; “The Colonel comes ! Perfidious man ! He said he would not be in till nine ! Let me hide you here,” and she opened a door.

“No,” said Singleton, and in came the Colonel.

“How are you, sir?” said Singleton, quietly, and with a facility of manner which, under the circumstances, raised him very much in Circe’s estimation. “I just came in to see how Mrs. Bray was ; she seemed ill last night.”

“Ah, poor thing,” said the gallant Colonel, “she has these delicate attacks sometimes.” Circe blushed, and stole a glance at Fontenoy, who looked very grave.

“My dear,” said the Colonel, “let us have lights. I never saw such a person for sitting in the dark. Now, Fontenoy, you shall see my maps. Here is Dover.”

They formed quite a family picture. There sat the Colonel with a map and a pair of

compasses, with the patient Singleton listening to him. The fair Circe was opposite, with a piece of embroidery, and before her lay a little volume, published at Brussels. It was a "philosophical" French novel, written by a pure female enthusiast, and containing the history of a young woman of superior genius, who ran away from a great, monstrous, moral Marquis, to whom she was married, with a divine galley-slave.

"A is the fort," said the Colonel; "B is the enemy's army in a flotilla; C is our fleet running away from the gun-boats; D——"

"Stands for dunce," said the playful Circe.

"Mind your own work, my dear," said her husband, gently. Circe resumed a love-scene, between Adèle and the tender *forçat*.

"I am afraid it begins to get late," said Singleton, looking at his watch.

"Oh, wait a little longer," said the Colonel. "E——"

A slight sound was perceptible in the street, shortly afterwards. Circe blushed, as Fontenoy looked up.

It was a musical instrument, and accom-

panied by a rather musical voice. Clearly it was not an ordinary itinerant performer.

The Colonel was drawing a trigonometrical figure, and wholly occupied with it. Singleton's attention involuntarily wandered away, as the music became more clearly audible. He began to see that he was performing in a Comedy, for the music was a serenade. Poor Colonel!

Unfortunately for Circe it was a fine, clear, still night; so soon the following stanza was audible:—

Charmer fair—should thy fancy move thee,
Yet, to declare, that thou dost not love me—
After all I have felt and spoken,
Would my faith, or only my heart be broken?

“What's that cussed row?” broke in the Colonel, starting to his feet, while Circe jumped up also, looking very angry and frightened.

“It's to the people in the other house,” she answered.

“It ain't tenanted,” cried the Colonel, and he ran to the window.

“Save me again,” whispered Circe, pressing Singleton's hand. He seized his hat.

“Good night, Colonel.” The Colonel ran down after him. Singleton saw a figure in the street, retreating. He followed it, and at a safe distance found Mr. Frederick Lepel.

“Why, hillo, Fontenoy.”

“Oh, it’s you,” said Singleton. “You usually serenade people when their husbands are in, do you?”

“What, Mentor out on the loose,” said Lepel, with a facetious sneer. “Circe’s been trying her fascinations with you, eh? I suppose this is one of a series of ‘philosophical experiments’ of hers. Bravo! Three cheers for Madame ——.”

“What does all this mean?” asked Singleton.

“You’ll know it all by and by. My boy, you won’t be a dreamer all your life; or, if you are, so much the worse for you. You may write Romances, if you like, but let me act them.”

In these words, Lepel accurately and acutely defined their respective characters. Singleton said nothing, but fell into a fit of musing, and they walked, without speaking, to the George

Inn, where their horses were. Singleton was a mere boy ; but how fast he was growing.

The Colonel and his philosophical lady left Huskdale next day. I have touched very lightly on the incident in Singleton's career in which they figured. It was necessary to influence his character and illustrate Lepel's. This worthy couple now make their final exit from these pages,—not, I trust, without having borne testimony to the merits of their respective schools. The husband may represent certain alarmists, calculated to bring weak-minded gentlemen to Bedlam ; the wife, certain philosophical teachers, who catch the weak by their sweet and cloying diction, as flies are caught by honey.

Europe is now invaded by a band of female warriors, who sacrifice their feminine delicacy for the sake of literary and political influence, as the ancient Amazons seared their breasts that they might handle the bow.

CHAPTER IV.

Currite ducentes subtemina, currite, fusi.

CATULLUS, *Carm.* 61.

Spin the Fates' threads, and mix them as you spin.

It was a beautiful autumn morning. The sun was out, and Augusta Lepel was smiling! A month had passed since Mr. Trochee's departure, and yet not a word of Singleton's going to school. Perhaps he owed the parental forbearance to the kind influence of old Mr. Lepel, one of the best and kindest of men, though weak—paternally indulgent to all the youth of his acquaintance, lovingly fond of his wife and daughter, and exceedingly

proud (for which I am afraid we shall have in due time to pity him,) of his only son and heir, the clever and ambitious Frederick. Singleton, accordingly, was without an instructor—except Augusta, who taught him a great deal. She was twenty-three, Singleton not quite sixteen, but precocious, as we know. She was highly gifted, and Singleton very studious ; so he made great progress !

Out upon the terrace at Dunreddin, at noon, were a large party, enjoying the warm rays, which needed all their power to temper the naturally chilly air. Fontenoy *père*, was talking earnestly with old Mr. Lepel, and glancing occasionally at Augusta, who was interchanging light, gay dialogue with Singleton. What did this portend ? The Oxonians were gathered in a respectful semi-circle round the lady of the house, and duly devoting themselves to her entertainment. What a beautiful morning !

“ Now,” cried Frederick Lepel ; “ this is what people call ‘ completely English ! ’ Here we are, amusing ourselves and doing nothing in the most comfortable manner, regardless

of the busy hum of yon town," pointing to Huskdale, whose spires peeped above the horizon, "and quite satisfied that we are the finest people in the world."

"Well, your inference?" asked Mr. Bones.

"Oh, I'm too lazy to draw inferences this fine day," said the lively Fred. "But isn't the picture characteristic? By Jove, I believe the English upper classes are the idlest people in the world. We lounge over the sciences, dawdle through literature, yawn over politics. A revolution that convulses Europe is only something new to 'talk about' to us, and a movement that threatens the empire is considered nothing but 'a bore!'"

Mr. Fontenoy thought that a lively young man was a standing insult to the gravity of middle age, so he listened very coldly to Frederick's speech. But Mr. Lepel was highly pleased with him, and said,

"Well, Fred, you must show a good example. Begin!"

"What a curious effect the appearance of the moon has at this hour!" remarked

Augusta, looking up at the pale crescent in the blue sky.

"It is an emblem of Faith—paling before the gross material splendour of the sun of commerce," said Mr. Bones.

"I carry a moon of that shape on my coat-of-arms," said Mr. Fontenoy.

"It's very pretty," said Mrs. Lepel.

"How grateful we ought all to be, for our blessings," said her husband.

"The moving moon went up the sky," quoted Singleton, from the "Ancient Mariner."

"She is very like green cheese," said Frederick.

As he spoke, a servant appeared, and handed him a newspaper that had just arrived. He seized it eagerly and tore it open; it was the *Huskdale Courier*, a leading journal of the county in the liberal interest. He turned over the pages, and uttered an exclamation of delight.

"What is it?" asked his father.

"The beginning;" answered Frederick, with his eyes brightening, while the whole party gathered round him. "They meet

to-day in Huskdale, to petition for ——'s dismissal. Two mills have stopped. The crops are bad—everything's in motion. Let us go into town. Who'll go?"

He turned round to them, with excitement in his whole figure. Most of the young men expressed their readiness for anything.

"I'm tired of the pheasants," said Farquhar, the Christ Church man; "anything for a change."

"But, Fred," said Mr. Lepel, "have you made up your mind—be cautious, you know."

"Oh, yes," he replied; "mind quite made up—packed with principles as neatly as a carpet bag. But there's no time to lose. I'll order the phaeton;" and away he went, followed by all the youths of the party.

"Singleton," cried Mr. Fontenoy to his son; "you will be very careful what you do if you please. Remember, I am in the commission of the peace; I have no wish to see a Wilkes in *our* family."

Augusta looked rather anxious as they left, and hung on her mother's arm; Mr. Lepel talked merrily about the buoyancy of youth.

Mr. Fontenoy was sulky. The women expressed their kind natural sympathies. The youths drove off.

The town of Huskdale was agitated to the depth of its dark abysses. It was now drawing towards the close of one of those unfortunate years which intervened between the Reform Bill and the formation of the Conservative Government. A bad harvest had followed a bad harvest. There was a depression in commerce, and this was succeeded by the moral miasma which always rises from stagnant trade. Wanting food, the masses resorted to agitation, and talked of principles, while Government was thus hampered with the double task of relief and resistance. In this predicament the country looked alternately at riots and at cabinet councils; and the question seemed to resolve itself into Hunger and Dragoons.

Lepel's party rattled gaily into the town, which was all alive with emotion. There, marched troops of mechanics along the pavements, talking to each other, some with earnest gestures, others laughing, with the

devil-may-care desperation of men who knew that all this would end in no relief. Some of the shops were closed; at the doors of others, white-aproned tradesmen were standing, and looking out at the passers-by. Small bodies of police defiled quickly, but quietly, down the pavements, carefully avoiding the gaze of the populace; a detachment of soldiers were in barracks, under arms, near the scene of the intended meeting. 'Twas altogether a grand constitutional spectacle—the town of Huskdale that afternoon; yet, strange to say, the effect of the whole was lively and cheerful. A day of grievances is always a gala day for Huskdale.

The phaeton, drawn by a couple of neat greys, drove up the main street. Suddenly Lepel drew up by the kerb, flung the reins to Farquhar, and jumped out. They saw him run into some place there, and looking up at the house, observed “Huskdale Courier” in large letters above the first floor windows.

“I say,” said Farquhar to Fontenoy, “What is he going to do there? Radical paper the ‘Courier,’ ain’t it? I don’t mind a lark,

you know, but we must not have any row."

Lepel came out again at that instant, attended by a little man in black, with a pen behind his ear. "We get down here," he said. Down they jumped. A man came up and took charge of the phaeton. They went with the man from the "Courier" office, and reached the Hall—a huge building, used for many purposes—where the meeting was to be held. It was near the time announced. An enormous mob pressed against the entrance, squeezing, crushing, groaning, like a thick forest stirred by a winter gale. "Help!" and "Oh, God!"—these were the sounds that broke from the dense crowd, varied occasionally by a sharp cry. The multitude moved every now and then in quick, short convulsions; for that multitude throbbed with a common heart, and that heart diseased.

Lepel and his friends passed in through a private door, and emerged on a spacious platform or gallery, bounded by a rail, which stood at one end of the Hall. They sat down at the corner in front. The platform was quickly

filling; suddenly the Hall doors flew open. Like a roaring torrent in poured the crowd. Before you could have breathed thrice that huge building was swarming with life. Singleton was profoundly moved. It was the first time in his existence that he had seen anything of the sort. He hid his face in his hands for a moment with emotion. He began to feel what politics might be; then he thought for an instant of the library at Heatherby, and it flashed upon him that he was the most worthless dreamer under God's sky. He, whose thoughts had wandered through creation, what an insignificant being he was here! His eyes turned to Lepel. Never had he seen him so elated. In the centre of each pale cheek stood a single flushed spot. His eyes sparkled with the steady permanent gleam of awakened, unsleeping excitement; and what should dull that dangerous fire lighted by ambition in his active soul? His fair, delicate, mobile brow worked uneasily. He never looked at Singleton; his bright eyes were steadily fixed. Slight nervous gestures showed his agitation. You would have

thought him possessed by a devil—and so he was !

Through the great crowd there now passed an emotion of excitement and expectancy. So hum the pines when the wind begins slowly to rise in the great western forests.

Singleton glanced at those who occupied the platform on which he and his friends were. In the chair, as president, sat the mayor of the town. A respectable, well-to-do tradesman, all his sympathies were with the *bourgeoisie* to which he belonged—the most stolid, the most immovable, the most bigoted of factions. Aristocracy adorns itself with a sentiment ; the mob are elevated by their passion ; but the *bourgeoisie* has but its money to give it interest or inspiration. The mayor thought it all quite well to elevate the people, but much more important to lower the poor-rates.

Beside the chairman was seated a far greater person—the Reverend Mr. Rutter, rector of St. George's parish, Huskdale—the indomitable high church leader of the uncompromising Tory party. You saw as much in his large, bald

forehead, and quick eyes. Mr. Rutter was a large man, but

**Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet !*

He was very clever also. He was at once a sturdy foe to dissent, and a great cause of it, and his zeal against dissenters usually had these two results—to deprive their chapels of steeples, and to fill them with proselytes. He was a strong Tory, more zealous at public meetings than in the pulpit; and notwithstanding his sacred profession, was hardly ever so severe on the devil as on a Radical editor! The more excited portion of the meeting hooted him, which disturbed him very slightly. He glanced round the platform, and met the eyes of Singleton, whom he knew very well (for he and Mr. Fontenoy were great friends), and bowed to him, with considerable surprise at seeing him there.

. . . And now the expectancy of the crowd grows stronger and stronger, and the excitement increases like a growing fire. Up rises the

* Mind moves the mass, and mixes itself with the great body. VIRGIL, *Æneid*, Book vi. v. 727.

chairman with a paper in his hand, quivering in his nervous grasp. The crowd greet him with a roar, such as you hear in Spain when the bull appears in the circus. He formally opens the business, and sits down again.

And then rose a well-known public speaker to move the first resolution.

Singleton had never heard a public speaker, and he now leant on his arm with his eyes fixed on this man, and listened intently. The language was very different from Bolingbroke's to be sure, but its force and applicability, its rugged energy, and Fescennine sarcasm, were invincible. The meeting was mad with indignation when he talked of the sufferings of the operatives and the hopelessness of legislative aid. Singleton was exhausted by the excitement of his sympathy alone, and drops of heavy perspiration stood on his brow. The orator almost screamed as he pronounced a peroration of invective, and his choking syllables were lost in the thunders of applause which greeted his conclusion. There was a pause and heavy breathings through the crowd; men turned up their hot faces to the roof, as if they were praying for rain.

The people on the platform whispered to each other eagerly. The feeling of the meeting was obviously intense. The whole of the manufacturing districts would be affected by the report that went forth to-morrow. Dangerous orators were to follow. Orthodoxy must do something. In the absence of justice, let the people try the Reverend Mr. Rutter!

Another agitator followed. Again came a whirlwind of passion. The meeting was over-crammed. There was a loud cry of "Police," a man fainting, a shout for air, and ten minutes of confusion. Singleton was more and more moved. He would burn his Homer next day. The speaker said that ten thousand able-bodied men were destitute of employment, and soon would be of bread. Singleton resolved that The Ancient Mariner should follow. A dreamer! He was a drone and dunce,—the most contemptible of mankind!

Up rose Mr. Rutter. There was something majestic in it. Virgil's *vir pietate gravis* was not more calmly grave and solemnly decorous. Mr. Rutter looked like the British Constitution

in gaiters! He was a grand impersonation of our national respectability. When he rose, however, there was a tremendous burst of groaning and yelling, opposed by a stout cheering from some of his faithful admirers. Great noise followed. Mr. Rutter adroitly seized an opening; his fluent rhetoric shot through the tumult as Arethusa through the sea. He secured a hearing.

"This is a d—d sensible old fellow," whispered Farquhar to Fontenoy.

Singleton laughed. His emotion was subsiding under the influence of Rutter's cold watery stream of speech. But it did not diminish the influence on his mind of the previous harangues. He had acquired thus early a habit of looking at the souls of things more than their forms.

Mr. Rutter was successful after the fashion of his kind. If the people, wanting bread, got from him nothing but a stone, at least it was a stone of the highest polish. He was miraculously plausible, and to hear him talk, you would have thought hunger one of the worst of crimes. He recommended resignation, and

condemned complaint; and down he sat, amidst conflicting noises. Singleton buried his face in his hands and began to muse, when suddenly Farquhar seized his arm. He turned anxiously round. What was his astonishment, and that of his set, when Lepel rose, and presented himself to the meeting! There were loud cries of "Who are you?" "What's your name?"

"Gentlemen," said he, "I am Mr. Lepel, of Dunreddin, in this neighbourhood, a country gentleman; and though a country gentleman, a friend to industry and a lover of the people!"

Singleton stared at him with astonishment.

"Bravo, bravo!" cried three or four voices; and there was a loud cheer.

"I saw with astonishment, as I came here to-day, the streets of your peaceful and industrious city filled with soldiers; and I confess I thought as I did so of Rome sold by the Prætorian Guards."

If Lepel had been studying agitation and the people of Huskdale for five years, he could not have hit on a more effective opening, or

an allusion better calculated to inflame the passions which Mr. Rutter had been endeavouring to soothe down. From the whole of the multitude there burst a tremendous cheer.

On he went, with equal success. You felt that you were listening to a man who had found his proper vocation. Vigorous, copious, accurate, and graphic, without a ray of imagination, but with so much that everybody could appreciate, his language seemed the sublime of common sense. And then he indulged perpetually in sarcasms, not fanciful and ingenious, but broad, sensible, and funny. He attacked, not like a gladiator, but an English bruiser. It was Cobbett all over, and Cobbett when he was young. His personification of a Tory Lord of the Marquis de Carabas' school, "preserving rigidly everything but his tenantry," and "once in five years making a great parade of returning ten per cent. of a rent that was fifty per cent. too high," brought down roars of applause from the radicals, who recognised the portrait; and when he grew warmer, and alluded to "reverend oppressors of the poor," and "ungracious ministers of

grace," the roof trembled with the thunder of the cheering which followed; and Singleton, looking at Mr. Rutter, saw that anger was rising to his forehead, and that he was writhing with indignation.

"There was a time, gentlemen," said Lepel, "when the labouring men of this kingdom had daily good beef and beer."

"When was that?" asked Mr. Rutter, starting up in great wrath.

"Not in your time, we may be sure," said the orator, with great composure, and a sublime wave of his hand, while loud laughter and cries of "Oh," and "Shame," from Mr. Rutter's supporters followed. "Really this irritation scarcely becomes so meek and exemplary a pastor! But we have now rabidity from the most unexpected quarters. We are daily hearing violent harangues against the popular party, and this 'black vomit' is the deadliest symptom of our political fever!"

This was a metaphor peculiarly adapted to the audience, and was wonderfully applauded.

Lepel concluded with a violent peroration ;

as he sat down, cheering burst again and again from the meeting.

“Three cheers for Mr. Lepel!” cried somebody.

They were given gloriously; and as he turned to his friends, they saw his hands trembling violently, and his features covered with a light dew of perspiration which sparkled on the purple flush.

Every obnoxious resolution was carried immediately. The people on the platform rose to go away, and Lepel and his friends went out again by the private door. As they gained the street, he was recognized by the populace and loudly cheered, much to the annoyance of Mr. Farquhar. “Come, my boys,” said Lepel, to his companions, “we’ll slip away, and dine at the George.”

They went to the inn in question, one of the best in the town, and there they found a private room, with fire blazing, neat wax candles ready for lighting, cloth elegantly laid, and sherry and madeira comfortably airing themselves.

“Why, hang it, one would think they had expected us,” said Farquhar.

"Yes," said Lepel, drily, and with a grin, "it looks like it. Here are the true friends of the people!" And so saying, this great patriot seized the sherry with his usual liveliness, and mixed himself a tumbler of wine and water. "Are we justified, my friends," he continued, "in drinking claret in the present state of the labouring population?"

All this was doubtless very facetious, but the truth is that Singleton was getting somewhat shocked by it, and Lepel, perhaps seeing as much, changed his tone, and rung the bell for dinner with his "spectacle" look. He had wonderful versatility of manner, this young gentleman, and was born to be an intrigant.

The dinner was now brought up, plain, but very good; soup, a pair of fowls, neck of mutton and turnips, game, and stilton and celery. They talked very little during the repast, but after the cloth was removed, and port and madeira with dessert fairly established, Lepel resumed his jolly look, filled up a glass, and said, "Gentlemen, I give you the people, the only source of legitimate power!" with a delicious leer.

There was a roar of laughter at this, and "what a shame, old boy!" from his easy companions. Lepel's vanity was highly delighted. With the most fiery ambition, he was very vain.

"Pretty fellows, you are," he said, with a laugh, "not to have told me yet, what you think of my speech."

"I tell you, candidly," said Farquhar, tossing off his wine, "that it was a d——d deal better, than I ever thought you could do. By Jove, it was first-rate, but it's cursed wrong you know, and all that."

"It reminded me of Tierney," said Singleton, who had read a good deal of oratory. "It was excellent."

"It was admirable," said Bones. "But I say nothing of its principles, mind you." And Bones, who was of a dark complexion, looked very grave.

Lepel's eyes sparkled as he heard all their encomiums. "Never mind that last question at present. I'll show them what a gentleman can do when he takes to agitation. The mob

have been in the hands of bagmen too long.
Pass the wine, my boys,

Les vrais amis de la bouteille,
Sont chéris de l'Etre Divin !

as my poor friend Dupuis used to sing." The wine passed round immediately, and there was many a lively remark and gay boast.

"Let us drink the memory of Rochefoucauld," said Lepel. "His maxims are like cracker-bonbons, smart, snapping, and devilish good things."

"The memory of Catullus," said Farquhar, taking the notion up in his turn. "He was the most brilliant fast man of antiquity, and can be compared to nothing but Apollo out on the loose."

"The memory of that Pope (I have forgot his name)" said Bones, ecclesiastical in his wildest moments, "who originated the phrase, *Bibamus Papaliter* !"

"The memory of Chatterton," said Singleton, with his blue eyes beaming fire, "the most admirable genius from the days of Shakspeare to the birth of Shelley, who gained an immortality before he was eighteen."

This was received with enthusiasm, and the memory of these favourites duly honoured, much as the ancients themselves honoured their dead, by pouring wine on their ashes.

They had just drunk Singleton's toast, when there was a small, curious tapping at the door heard, which produced an immediate silence.

"Enter," cried Lepel.

The door opened, and there appeared—a boy, of singular aspect.

He was dressed in youthful corduroys, and a black waistcoat. His shirt sleeves were tucked up, displaying smutty arms. On his mouth there was a smile and a smudge of ink. In one hand he held a paper cap, of coronal shape ; in the other, he carried a long strip of printed paper. With this advancing, he presented it to Lepel.

"Behold a cacodæmon !" cried Lepel.

"I'll wait for the proof, sir," said the boy,—"the wondrous boy,"—seating himself in a chair, and tucking up his youthful legs, with the most consummate ease. "They're a-going to press early this week."

"What a doosed mysterious fellow you

are, Fred," said Farquhar. "What's this go?"

"We shall see," said Lepel, mysteriously. Here he rang the bell: the waiter duly appeared. "Coffee;" and he added, "Bring paper, ink, and pens, and a basin of cold water.—Now, some of you fellows, give that youth a glass of port: he is one of the Slaves of the Lamp of Knowledge."

The boy drank tranquilly, and composed himself to sleep!

In a short time up came the coffee, &c. Lepel soused his face in the cold water, and bathed his forehead eagerly, while his friends watched him, and wondered what he was going to do. He soon sat down, drank some coffee, then seized pen and ink. In a few moments he had dismissed the proof, and he flung it over to Singleton and the others. It was part of that afternoon's speech.

"Why, hang it! you're not editing the 'Courier?'" said Farquhar.

"No," said Lepel, quietly, and beginning to cover a sheet of paper with writing at an astonishing rate. His rapid pen went forward,

and seemed to pour out its sharp, clear characters by magic.

“Now for a few lines for the Poet’s Corner, my boys! What say you? Epigram on Rutter—quick!”

Between them all, they knocked up the following

EPIGRAM ON A HEAVY PREACHER.

Poor Booby makes a sad mistake,
From which amusement we may reap,
When he the conscience should awake,
He sends the sinner off to sleep!

When all are snug within their pews,
He’s great on Origin of Evil!
But I’ve my own peculiar views,
I think his sermons are—the Devil!

ACER.

“Now, boy,” said Lepel, “off like the wind;” and the imp vanished most dramatically.

“I have begun my career!” Lepel cried, flinging away the pen.

And immediately after he summoned the waiter, settled the bill, and they drove away.

It was a beautiful evening, and the sky was populous with stars, as they dashed along the

road to Dunreddin ; and the pleasant bright moonlight made the house beautiful and the avenue cheerful. What a change from the excitement of the town, and the day !

The ladies were up stairs in the drawing-room at tea. Our party soon joined them. Mrs. Lepel was playing chess with Ellen Pierrepont, who had come over during their absence. Augusta was leaning back on the ottoman, reading poetry. Singleton's father was teasing a little, queer pug-dog, with a coat like Berlin wool.

Frederick marched in first, as usual.

"Dear me, Ellen, you have broken the flag off that castle !" said his mother.

"Emblematic of the fate of the oligarchy," said Frederick, laughing. "How is the sweet P.?" he continued ; for, owing to his plain, sensible, off-hand manner, he had a license from young ladies which was not conceded to more romantic youths. But Ellen was not likely to find fault with anything he did. She received him with a frank, gay smile, full of light and colour. But Frederick cared far more for a cheer. Misguided youth !

"Well," asked his mother, "was there a meeting?"

"Yes," said Frederick, quietly.

Ellen looked up. Why did he not go, and sit down beside her?

"Well, Fred," pursued his mother, "tell us about the proceedings."

"Ask Singleton."

"Let me congratulate you on the accession of an orator."

"Do you mean to say you spoke in public, Frederick?" asked Mrs. Lepel.

"Yes, mamma, I did."

Mrs. Lepel looked very grave. Augusta closed her volume, and looked up.

"Where's my father?" asked Frederick.

"There's a gentleman with him in the study, who came about seven o'clock."

"Do you know who it is?"

His mother rang the bell.

"Who is with your master, Thomas?"

"The REV. MR. RUTTER, from Huskdale, ma'am."

CHAPTER V.

Spes et præmia in ambiguo : certa, funera et luctus.

TACITUS, *Hist. Lib.* ii. 45.

Hopes and rewards were matter of ambiguity : deaths and grief—certain.

NEXT day about noon Singleton was sitting in the library at Heatherby—which was only about a mile and a half from Dunreddin—reading Jeremy Taylor. Every now and then he laid down the volume, and found his thoughts wandering to the proceedings of the day before. His excitement seemed to him, now, very foolish and useless. It had been an affair of the imagination—like his sympathies with the hero of a romance—he began to think. What could *he* do, to ameliorate evils? He

had, or thought he had, quite a deficiency in those qualities which seemed to mark his friend Frederick Lepel out for a worker and mover. Besides, could the race be permanently much elevated? Was it not always the same story over again, this history of theirs? Barbarism, wars, despotism, civilization, corrupted civilization, decay—barbarism over again!

He paced up and down the room in a fit of melancholy meditation; he gazed out of the windows wistfully; the world seemed covered with a sickly haze. He pined for action of some sort. "How much better," he thought, is the honest woodman, who cuts down an oak to feed the wood fire that warms his family, than either the enthusiast who dreams in its shade, the poet who describes it, the scientific man who measures it, or the botanist who classifies it!"

A servant, at this period of his speculations, entered the room with a note for him. It was a triangular, pink, perfumed little affair, pleasant to the eye, and grateful to the sense. He took it from the salver; the servant withdrew.

It was from Augusta Lepel.

This was the first time he had ever received a note from her, though he saw her constantly, and the two families, indeed, were in the closest intimacy. So, it made a kind of little era. It ran as follows :—

“DEAR SINGLETON,

“Will you join a little pic-nic excursion to the ruins of Trevor Abbey, this afternoon? Mr. Bones and his friends wish to see it before they go, which must be soon. Come over at once. Besides, I have something to say to you. We are all alarmed about Frederick. Enough :—come.

“AUGUSTA.”

The truth was, that the party at Dunreddin were rather in a state of uneasiness that morning. The London papers which had come down, were full of details about what they called the “disturbed state of the manufacturing districts.” Rumours, too, had reached them from Huskdale, that there had been disturbances in the town the night before. Mr. Lepel was silent, gloomy, and thoughtful all

breakfast-time, and scarcely spoke a word. Mrs. Lepel appeared with difficulty to preserve her calmness. Frederick did not come down to breakfast at all, but breakfasted in bed ; and before eleven o'clock the same imp whom Bones and Farquhar had seen the day before at the 'George,' was observed by them in the avenue, giving a parcel to one of the servants, and then rode back to Huskdale, on a butcher's pony, in a style which would have excited the admiration of his brother demons of London to an unnatural pitch of envy. The two Oxonians, as they saw this, were smoking in a leaning position against the garden-wall.

"I tell you what," said Farquhar, filliping the white ash from his cigar, "I'm off south very soon."

"We'll see Trevor to-day, then," said Bones, pensively.

"That fellow Fred will get himself into a scrape, I see," Farquhar went on. "No good ever comes of what's irregular. If a man must be public, let him go under somebody's wing. There was young Sickles: Lord Debosh brought him in for the Snugglesborough seat.

Sickles voted against the party—only by accident. He routed him out directly afterwards ; and I'm told the poor fellow's redoosed to editing a newspaper ! Now——”

Here Frederick Lepel approached them, and Farquhar stopped what he was saying ; for he was rather afraid of him, and perhaps anywhere else but in his own place would have fought shy of him altogether.

“ Well, oh ingenuous youths !” began Frederick, with his usual quiet, satirical smile ; “ what are you going to do to-day ?”

“ We are thinking of going to see the Abbey,” Bones replied.

“ Very good—youth is the season for amusement !” said Lepel, with a facetious paternal air. He was barely twenty-two, but he was old in energy—and some other things, as we shall see. “ The Abbey's on our property, you know,” he added ; “ at least the ruins of it are. Come, Bones, you shall have it at a moderate valuation. We'll build it by estimate, and rig you up as an abbot from the ‘ property’ stock of the Huskdale theatre !”

While they were laughing at this preposal,

it was announced to the speaker that his father wished to see him in the study ; at which the laugh was renewed against himself. The two Oxonians very well knew what this sort of interview meant in general ; they little understood how differently Lepel viewed it.

“ *Au revoir*,” he cried, waving his hand ; “ I shall not be long.” And Farquhar nodded and laughed.

We will follow Frederick.

He found his father, who was a fine venerable old man, drawing towards sixty, with a sweet serene countenance,—“ a lively eye and a benevolent smile,”*—seated with much formality in his arm-chair. He was not remarkable for energy of character, or indeed for his intellectual qualities generally ; but if mediocre, he was agreeably mediocre. He had been educated in the worst prejudices ; but if they had warped his nature, they had not spoiled it ; and as for his disposition, nothing could contaminate that.

* D'Aubigné, of the late Dr. Chalmers. “ *Travelling Recollections*” (Book 2nd).

"Sit down, Frederick," he said, after shaking hands with him affectionately. Frederick had his spectacles on: there was an air of calm enthusiasm about him which it was refreshing to look at. He awaited his father's words with profound attention and filial deference.

"Frederick," his father began, "Mr. Rutter was over here from Huskdale last night."

Frederick gave a slight bow.

"I heard from him of your proceedings, yesterday, at this meeting. I am very much surprised, and, I may add, pained at your behaviour. Dear me," he went on, agitated with the thought, "you will compromise us all. Such violent language, such unscrupulous hostility to all that is established! These are dangerous times."

"The more need for the gentlemen of England to exert themselves," said his son, mildly, but firmly.

"But consider, my dear boy, consider the family. That is the link. Isn't there something—Burke, I rather fancy—" Mr. Lepel looked puzzled for a moment, but the quotation escaped him. "At all events, you must see

that such radicalism is impossible to persons in our position, an old, well-connected family. Frederick, just ask yourself this, what would Lord Sycamore, whose wife presented your sister, our connection as everybody knows he is,—what would he say to such a speech as you made? God bless me, if it should get abroad!”

“Get abroad,” thought his son, “what will he say to the ‘*Courier*?’” Frederick turned a little pale, as he thought of all he had plunged into.

“You have very good talents,” continued Mr. Lepel, “talents that may lead to any reasonable position. The estate is entailed, as you know. What an authority you may be, with care! If this false step has not ruined all!” he concluded, playing with a pen, nervously, and adjusting himself uneasily in his chair. The old gentleman had been not a little moved by all this; he had that timorous apprehension of publicity, change, and excitement, so natural to one educated entirely in the old school, and who had lived all his life in wealth and good society. He had

always had the highest opinion of his son's powers, and had, of late, begun to fear his character.

"I have had nothing but the greatest kindness from you," began Frederick, seriously and impressively, "but I like to see kindness, like other natural blessings, such as light, extended to all the world; and I wish you to make that goodness which cheers your own circle, animate and benefit a wider sphere. I am sure you will recollect," pursued Frederick, artfully, "what your favourite Johnson says of goodness which is limited in its operation, that it 'wants the sacred splendour of munificence.' Now, my dear sir, what are the facts regarding the state of the English lower classes?" So saying, Frederick secured the old gentleman's attention, opened a brief, ingenious, and lucid statement, and concluded by appealing to his sympathy in favour of his exertions in the cause of "the masses."

Mr. Lepel was considerably moved. He was a very kind-hearted man, as I have said, and besides, was one of those, who (holding conservative opinions) had begun dimly to look

on the Reform Bill as a measure that, once passed, must necessarily lead to further results. He had opposed the Reform Bill; but was it worth while to carry on an antagonism that had already been defeated, and which was possibly morally wrong? He remained for a few minutes in deep reflection.

Suddenly he rose up. "Frederick, I feel that it is impossible that you can carry on a public agitation. But, I tell you what. I am afraid, it is too true, that the lower orders have never been properly considered. Every man can do good in his own sphere. We will look to our tenants. You and I can go over the rent roll together. We will abate the rents wherever we can, and retrench to make up the difference."

It was lucky for Mr. Frederick Lepel, that he possessed in an eminent degree that command of countenance so necessary to the patriot,—otherwise, he must have been overwhelmed by this burst of the old gentleman's. For a moment he was silent, actually silenced by this stroke so unconsciously given him by his father, who could not have hit on a better,

if he had been trained in diplomacy. By particularly good fortune, there was a slight tap at the door at that instant. Augusta entered to say that the party were just about to start. Her fair face with its fresh hues was quite a relief. The truth is, Augusta had had an idea that something unpleasant might be taking place, and with all her natural kindness and tenderness, had come in hopes to neutralize it. Her appearance broke up the interview. The father and son shook hands; Mr. Lepel begging Frederick "to think over what he had said to him."

When Frederick reached his bedroom to prepare for the excursion, he shut the door with violence, and burst into a roar of laughter. "Capital, by Jove! That was an idea of my father's, with a vengeance." He chuckled all the time he was dressing at the notion, and then, seizing a pocket handkerchief, rushed down stairs to the party, who were waiting for him. "Good morning, Singleton, fine day, *en avant, marchons!*" And off they started on their pilgrimage.

It was one of those fine afternoons of dry,

pure air, and fine tempered sunlight, which we sometimes have in Autumn, before that season departs finally to join "the years beyond the flood." The country was radiant with all the variety of colours which mark the period ; and that country where our friends were is very beautiful. It undulates with hill and vale ; it is dotted, here and there, with little Saxon churches with ivy-clad towers, of a date long anterior, as we may be sure, to the town of Huskdale. The horizon is bounded by high, bare mountains, on whose summits the snow lingers all the year round ; the dells have in them quarries, worked, exhausted, and abandoned long ago, and now full of trees and brushwood, from out which, in the moist twilight of the morning, young rabbits steal to crop the green barley of the fields near. No manufacturing town has a site so nearly poetic as Huskdale, or so few of the disagreeable characteristics of such cities. Yet, nowhere does there exist such a want of anything approaching to unanimity between the civic and rural inhabitants of the country.

Frederick and Farquhar marched on, in

front, talking about Oxford ; Frederick, who had been educated principally abroad, and who belonged altogether to the progress party, attacking it as a bad place of instruction ; Farquhar, on the contrary, defending it, which, (when we reflect on what it had done for that youth) was, at least, disinterested. Next came Mr. Bones, with the enthusiasm of a pilgrim in his face, and in his right hand a considerable basket of refreshments. Lastly, came Augusta and Singleton ; they were talking away as usual, in a manner at once playful and full of feeling.

“ What do you suppose to be the exact nature of the pleasure we receive from seeing ruins ? There is a pleasure, but yet it is sad too,” said Singleton to his fair instructress.

“ Dear me, Singleton,” said Augusta, “ what difficult questions you put. Why, I think it is, that we have a pleasure in doing honour to the dead, who once inhabited them ; we feel that perhaps they are conscious of our kindness, and that it compensates for the decay.”

“ I am afraid that’s rather far-fetched,

Augusta," cried Frederick, whose quick ear had caught the remark, during a pause in his dialogue with Farquhar.

"Yes," said Singleton, "for it was fetched from Heaven!"

"There's a true knight," cried Augusta, laughing at the hyperbole.

"Where is the guerdon?" said Singleton, in a low voice.

Augusta smiled, and looked at him with a blush.

That was it!

"Neat," said Frederick, dropping behind, that the conversation might become general. "But I'll explain the pleasure you talk about. The pleasure of seeing ruins consists in this, that we mentally compare them with our own snug dwellings, and felicitate ourselves on the contrast."

"But if a man were houseless and homeless he would feel the pleasure," said Bones.

"If so, it would be because he saw a chance of taking a shelter in the nook, there," replied Lepel.

"What do we live for, after all?" said

Bones, with a sigh. (He began to find the basket heavy.)

"The greatest happiness of the greatest number," Lepel answered.

"And what is the greatest number?" asked Bones.

"No. 1!" cried Farquhar, briskly.

"Capital," cried Bones, and everybody laughed again.

"That will do for your next wine-party at Christ Church," Lepel said, smiling. Farquhar was charmed.

They were now drawing near the abbey, the ruins of which occupied a large space of ground, and were almost entirely covered with ivy. The stones were black with age, and nettles hung out of the ruined tower here and there. Stiff, black yew trees sprang up, from out the piles of ruins, too, their cold, gloomy life suiting well with the desolation round.

As the party approached, a heavy barn-owl was scared from his retreat, and with many a melancholy whoop, beating the air with his dull wings, made for a neighbouring wood. The daws clamoured with their harsh peevish-

ness ; and the starlings,—at once funereal and lively (like a group of drunken mutes),—started out of their ivy home.

“ This is poetry,” said Singleton, uncovering himself for a moment.

“ I feel it,” said Augusta, softly.

“ Sancte Kilderkine!” muttered Bones, invoking his favourite saint, in a low voice, “ sit, precor, tibi, terra levis!—sit nomen honoratum! Ambulans, edens, bibens, sum tui memor.” Bones was a solid, grave, young man, who puzzled himself with the doctrines of a very clever set at Oriel, who first made him a proselyte, and then a laughing-stock.

“ It is a relic of cold, barbarous times of darkness and fraud, when a peasant was treated as a beast, and his lord was one,” said Lepel, who, if he had no sentiment, had passion,—from his political feelings,—which was sometimes nearly as effective. Singleton and Augusta made no observation ; they walked round the ruins together.

“ All the divine feelings crowd upon one here,” whispered Singleton, pressing her hand.

She smiled kindly. Singleton looked at her face, but his eyes were scarcely dry.

“I love you as a sister,” she said, quietly.

“I invoke you as a saint,” said Singleton.

A quarter of an hour passed away, and then the party sat down on a group of stones, to partake of the delicate collation which they had brought. In pic-nics, everything ought to be as gay as the open air under which it is taken ; the wine should reflect the heavens, for example. Leave bottled stout to ogres, oh, reader ! and honour the occasion with the ethereal sparkle of the transcendental Moselle.

“There must have been something divine in the idea which prompted the builder of this abbey,” said Bones.

“No doubt of it,” said Augusta.

“I fancy it was built just as we build,” said Frederick ; “because they thought it useful, and that it would pay. All buildings are the same.”

“What do you say to the Great Pyramid ?” asked Singleton.

"I call it Cheops' Folly!" replied Lepel, emptying his glass.

There is no arguing against a *mot*, so the laugh which followed this stopped the discussion.

"What is that noise?" said Farquhar, suddenly.

There was heard, just as he spoke, the sharp, hard ringing of a horse's hoofs over the ground, and in an instant afterwards, there galloped up to them a young man in the uniform of a hussar officer. His horse, which was a small, beautiful, black creature, as graceful as an antelope, bore the marks of hard riding, and its mouth sparkled with foam; the rider flung himself from his saddle within a few yards of them, and holding the bridle in one hand, with the other removed his cap and bowed low. He was very young, with long light hair, and a soft flaxen moustache, and seemed pale and harassed.

"I beg your pardon,—a thousand pardons," he said, faintly, "may I ask a glass of water?"

Lepel jumped to his feet at once. "God bless me,—there is no water. Let me intreat

you to take some Moselle." And he seized a silver chased cup, which was lying unused on the grass, and filled it with the hissing wine.

"Thank you, thank you," said the young officer, and he eagerly swallowed a draught of it. "You are very kind—" he looked round the circle, and spoke hurriedly and nervously. "I am going to Huskdale,—a detachment is ordered there ; I have ridden fifteen miles in the last hour ;—they say the country here's in a most disturbed state—riots expected every hour. Yesterday, a great meeting,—most inflammatory—too bad—poor people." He spoke these sentences in quick, broken fragments. Lepel looked at him hard ; there was scorn gathering in his heart, and a sneer rising upon his lips.

"Pray rest yourself a minute."

The officer bowed again, and meeting Augusta's look, by accident, coloured slightly.

"I hate the duty," he proceeded ; "all our's do,—but then, what times !"

"Yes," said Lepel, very calmly, "times indeed ! So, Government are *afraid*, are

they?" he asked, laying a slight emphasis on the last words.

"I fancy uneasy," replied the soldier, who with the quick tact which men of his profession acquire in such matters, saw to what class the party belonged. "There's always danger at these times in such places as this; it's as well you will have good protection."

With a half smile at these last words, he rose, bowed, thanked them again, jumped into the saddle, and galloped away to the high road, which lay near the field in which the ruins were situated.

"Well, let us return home," said Frederick, whose gaiety of manner had been quite driven away by the incident.

The party rose, somewhat damped also, and took the field-path towards Dunreddin. Augusta was silent, and Singleton did not like to risk the chance of producing any emotion by speaking to her.

"Come along, Farquhar," cried Frederick, motioning to him to take his arm; and as they walked away from the ruins, he pointed to the figure of the hussar, who was seen in the

distance, disappearing like a small black cloud. "There goes a cub of war,—a brainless youth, who ought to be trundling a hoop, as he no doubt was six months ago."

Frederick had that dislike and contempt for soldiers which is another characteristic of the school to which his tendencies led him.

"He seemed very gentlemanly," said Augusta, quietly.

"Oh, of course, gentlemanly enough," he replied; "we are all gentlemanly, I suppose. I say he is a dull machine, used for a vile purpose."

He spoke bitterly, for he was always in earnest in his contempt,—in whatever other matters he might be only an actor. His sister said nothing; they all walked on in silence, and in good time reached Dunreddin again. How calm and beautiful it looked as they approached;—to Augusta how holy—to her brother how tame!

Singleton's father was there, and going to stay dinner. So was Ellen Pierrepont. Mr. Fontenoy was in a very bad humour; he had been all the morning trying poachers. He

scarcely took any notice whatever of Frederick Lepel, which brought a glance to that youth's face which was not pleasant to see. He asked Singleton what he had been doing—as a matter of business—and yawned when he was informed; he said to Augusta that he hoped Singleton was not troublesome to her. He remarked that he did not think the fine weather would last long; that the radicals of Huskdale were great rascals, but would soon be “put down” if they tried anything: that the country interest was shamefully used by all governments; that Huskdale was a disgrace to the county; that in his grandfather's time it was a wretched village, where they kept nothing but the county fox-hounds; that the Chartist member wore a very bad hat; and that Mr. Rutter was an admirable preacher. In a word, Mr. Fontenoy was in force.

Frederick Lepel growled epigrams all the time they were at dinner. Mr. Fontenoy and he avoided commenting on each other. Ellen listened to Frederick with great admiration. Farquhar talked to Mrs. Lepel; Mr. Lepel

talked to his daughter ; and Bones opened on Singleton about the Romantic School : everybody talked to the wrong person, and everybody was uneasy.

After dinner, politics still kept hovering over the gentlemen's conversation, as it were ; in the drawing-room, matters, however, began to grow better, when Augusta sang.

Now it happened that a little girl, a sister of Miss Pierrepont, had come over to Dunreddin ; and while all were in the drawing-room, this child, who had been on the terrace, came running in.

"Such a pitty sight—such a very pitty sky !" she said, after the manner of childhood.

"What does 'pitty' Eva say?" asked Augusta, moving away the pretty child's light hair from its forehead, and kissing it.

"So very pitty a sky !" cried the child again. "Come, see sky with Eva."

Augusta rose, and went out to see what made little Eva so enthusiastic ; and most of the party followed. They gained the terrace.

And on the horizon, over Huskdale, the sky was flushing with a red glare.

"It is the aurora borealis," cried Augusta, hastily.

Behind her there was a low ringing laugh.

"Who was that?"

Nobody answered.

"That's no aurora borealis," said Mr. Fontenoy, brusquely and startled.

"No heavenly fire at all," said Singleton.

"It's a fire at Huskdale!" cried his father.

"Merciful God!"

At these words, there was a dead and deep silence among the party. The minds of all were full of the troubles of the period, and perhaps of their own relation to them; and they saw in the spectacle before them an object of more than ordinary terror.

Singleton stole near Augusta, and whispered to her some words to allay her fears. The silence lasted some time; then Mr. Lepel spoke:—

"Frederick."

There was no answer.

"Where is Frederick?"

Frederick was galloping to Huskdale as fast as a noble horse could carry him. Mr. Lepel

learnt that he had gone. He turned slightly pale, and walked into the house ; but he said nothing. The fire was slowly paling on the thick, murky sky ; only red, muddy clouds of smoke hung there, faintly visible.

There had been a riot—fortunately not a very serious one—in Huskdale ; and it had been followed by the conflagration, which was now being extinguished.

The neighbourhood of the scene of action was crowded with people, plashing in the water which flowed down the street in a dirty torrent. There gleamed the helmets of the Fire Brigade, striving to save the burning dwelling, which was wrapped round in a funeral garment of smoke. Windows burst—rafters cracked—up rose the many-coloured flames, fantastic in their shapes, towards heaven—curling, leaping, quivering. Then came a great rush of water, and a hiss, and a thick cloud of steam.

Two mechanics were standing on the pavement near, looking silently on the spectacle, and glancing, first, at the faces of the crowd,

which were lighted up by the fire, and then at each other.

Presently one of them nudged the other, and, rubbing his hands, said, "I'm blessed if it don't keep one warm—eh, Cowland?"

His companion laughed, and muttered—"Hush! So it does; and it's cheap, too."

And then they both laughed again. The fire at this instant burst another window, and shot out in a thin clear streak, like a golden branch.

A third mechanic came up to them, just as they were laughing. He was a tall, stout man, with a grave, pale countenance.

"Do you know," he said, "what the Bible says about the laughter o' fools?—That it's for all the world like thorns a-crackling under a pot! Let me tell you, my lads, that it *won't keep the pot boiling* either."

So saying, he passed on, and they saw him no more. Poor fellow! he was a mute, inglorious commentator.

The two mechanics looked at each other again, and then at the fire; the long hoses of the Fire Brigade were curling up the outside

like serpents ; the fire was getting gradually conquered. But the circumstance excited little emotion in that crowd, for the sympathies of the majority of them were with the Destroyer.

"It's getting low," said the mechanic, whom his companion had addressed as Cowland. Cowland's friend touched his arm meaningly as he spoke ; for there had approached them while he did so two persons, whose appearance distinctively marked them as belonging to a different order. One was a tall, thin, military-looking man, with a large moustache ; the other, a young one, wrapped in a cloak, and with a kind of foraging cap pulled far over his brows.

"A *feu de joie Anglais*," said the tall one to his companion.

"A political suttee," answered the other.

"Ah, Paris is the town for mob movements ! We deal with the very stones, like Deucalion—we turn them into men !"

"Hear that," whispered Cowland to his friend.

"If the People knew their own power !" pursued the first speaker.

Cowland addressed him.

"They are learning it, sir. We are to have a Convention soon."

His brother mechanic pulled him by the arm again, fearing perhaps that the strangers were spies.

By this time the crowd were beginning to disperse. The mechanics departed one way, the strangers another.

"I should like to visit the penetralia of these radical fellows," said the tall man. "They have secret societies here, too, as in Paris. You remember the 'Vrais Amis' that I introduced you too?"

"Oh yes," said his young companion, "but hang it, one must be cautious; this is a different country."

"I'm afraid you're not a genuine democrat. Remember, 'none but the brave deserve the fair,' it's the same thing in politics."

"Yes, deserve the fair, all well and good. But who get what they deserve?"

"Come on; let us beat up the haunts of what they preposterously call the 'lower orders.'"

It was late the next morning before Frederick Lepel reached Dunreddin, and the servant who had been waiting up for him saw that he was weary and excited. He remained for some time, however, before he went to bed, resting with his hands clasping his forehead, and elbows on the table in deep thought. Then he dipped into a book, and his eye fell on the passage which we have transferred to the head of this chapter, from the pages of the acute and profound historian of Rome,—that Rochefoucauld with a soul,—so keen, so deep, so earnest, so pathetic—immortal Tacitus! Melancholy and concise remark on civil commotions; *Spes et præmia in ambiguo : certa, funera et luctus!*

Lepel smiled, yawned wearily, began to undress. As he flung from his neck a heavy gold chain which he wore, "'Gad," he cried, "That's too pretentious for a friend of the people!"

CHAPTER VI.

O'er flower and fruit alike, Tom,
You pass with plodding feet,

* * * *

But Genius stops to loiter,
With all that it may meet.

THACKERAY.

WHILE Frederick Lepel was thus employed in the stormy pursuits of the opening of his career, and, to use a very expressive phrase that they have in the navy, was "as busy as the devil in a gale of wind," that active gentleman, Mr. Fontenoy, of Heatherby, discovered a school for Singleton. Dr. Helot, of Oaken Lodge, educated a limited number of young gentlemen of good family in the proper ortho-

dox way which Mr. Fontenoy loved. The school was near one of those beautiful lakes where the shade of the divine Coleridge no doubt loves to linger. It was a good long journey from Huskdale.

It had "turned out" several capital scholars. The doctor was a clever man, and had once been ambitious. Possessed of considerable Greek, and some audacity, he edited *Æschylus*. The phenomenon made him a miracle in England. Flushed with success, he went to travel. He reached Germany. One morning he entered the lecture-room of a famous Hellenist, in a famous university. The subject was *Æschylus* and his recent editors. "Of editions of this great poet," said the Professor, "there is one well nigh to men of true learning intolerable; the edition of one Helot, an Englishman." The Doctor waited awhile longer. He heard his unhappy edition pounded in the learned man's mortar. He rushed frantically out, and started for England that night. He became an under master in a school on his return, and married his head-master's daughter, a lady as learned as Mrs. Carter, and as

slovenly as Pope's *Artemisia*. He then took Oaken Lodge, which he conducted very successfully, and at the time that he wrote to say he was ready to receive our hero, he was tolerably advanced in life. His favourite instrument of correction was the cane. So far he conceded to modern ideas, which condemn the use of the birch. But he used the cane vigorously enough, and if, like Aaron's rod, it "swallowed up the rest" of the instruments of punishment, it combined all their terrors in itself.

A fine afternoon found Singleton walking along a romantic road which led from the town of Penguin to the Doctor's establishment. He had arrived at Penguin by the coach of the previous night. Next morning discovered to him that it was a beautiful country; so he left orders with the people of the inn to send on his luggage to the Lodge, and having obtained some general directions as to his route, set out to walk there. The air was keen, dry, and healthy. On the horizon towered fine blue mountains, marked with bright spots of snow. There was youth in his

veins, and poetry in his heart, so he walked merrily along, occasionally soliloquising, as two classes do, the very happy and the very sad. And soliloquising, he flourished about him a stick which had been presented to him by Frederick Lepel,—a good heavy one, for it had belonged to a satirical writer. To the motion of this, he kept time occasionally, by repeating verses which he remembered, a practice which keeps up the spirits of some people, as jingling the loose cash in their pockets appears to do those of the middle classes.

After walking along in this mood for some time, and passing several of those road-side houses to which the villagers in the north come in winter-time to drink ale with burnt oat-cake in it, Singleton arrived at a sharp turn in the road. Pausing here, before rounding the corner, to look at the country, he suddenly spied a book lying on the grass near the hedge. It was lying face downwards, and had evidently been dropped by accident. He darted to it and picked it up. It was a Virgil,—a very neat little edition. Here was a surprise. He scanned it carefully, and

found on a blank leaf, the single word
“Lalage.”

“Lalage.” What meant that prettiest of
antique names, thus written in that sweetest
of antique writers?

Singleton turned over the pages, laughing.
Then he repeated “Lalage” again and again,
making music in the lonely road, and chiming
over, from Horace’s delicious ode,

“Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
Dulce loquentem!”

There was a sound; he started, and saw
before him—just turning the corner with
quick step—a young girl of seventeen—with
deep blue eyes and a complexion (to use a
comparison of Propertius’) “like rose-leaves
swimming in pure milk.”

“The gorgeous vision seemed
To sate the air with beauty,”

as Mr. Coventry Patmore says. She stopped
short when she saw Singleton, glanced at the
book which he held open, and seemed a little
frightened. Singleton was not so shy now
as before he saw Circe, and, besides, he had
recently got hold of an idea that he did not

observe his race sufficiently, and was determined to repair the neglect! So he took off his cap, and bowed.

“Were you looking for this book?”

“It is my book,” said the girl demurely.

“Lalage!” mused Singleton. “A pretty name!” saying which, he continued glancing from the book to the girl. “You must not think me impertinent;—but you who love the classics will know that temporary insanity follows from encountering a nymph.”

She gave a little, grave smile.

“Well, Lalage, here is your book. We are walking the same way.”

They moved on together, and exchanged a few sentences more. Singleton loved girls of an intellectual turn. The fact is, that the affected hatred of “clever women” which we hear of so often, is usually the sentiment of Prigs and Sensualists—of whom it is well worthy.

“So you like Virgil, Lalage?”

“I do not know that I am a judge. It sometimes seems to me, when I consider his genius and his art, that his poem is like——”

"Like what, Lalage?" asked Singleton, stooping to pick up a chesnut which he flung away, as a kind of distraction.

"The shield of Achilles carved in a cameo," said Lalage.

Singleton's blue eyes flashed upon her face with a gleam of interest.

"It is happy.—But as to Æneas ; I confess I have no sympathy with him, eh, Lalage ? he is too respectable."

"Have we any genius in the world now ?" asked Lalage.

"You must look for them in the magazines," said Singleton, with a laugh.

Lalage sighed, "One could love a genius."

"Do you know, Lalage, I think you are a dreamer. I am something of a dreamer myself."

"Oh ! you will waken ; we do not wake."

Singleton was silent, and they walked on together. He was already impressed by this strange and beautiful creature. 'There is a kind of love which we experience only when we are very young—which has the purity of friendship and the aspiration of poetry—

which is mystical, and has no gratification but of the soul—which passes from our being like a summer air from the sea's face—and which (this is the most melancholy characteristic of it,) is seldom regretted.

Singleton gazed at her silently ; their eyes met, and she blushed.

An elevation in the road revealed a valley, with a small, quick, clear river running through it, spanned by a wooden bridge. A group of cottages formed a little village on its banks ; a rugged little church, with a flinty tower, and a roof whose red colour gleamed in the sun, was near. Half-way down the descending road was the entrance of a lane, and at this Lalage stopped. Singleton felt his heart stopping too.

She held out her soft, white hand to bid him good bye ; Singleton was confused, and began to remember the directions for his journey which he had received at Penguin. "Then to the left," he muttered.

"Pray, Lalage, where is Oaken Lodge?"

"I am going to it," she said, motioning to the lane.

“And I am going to it,” said Singleton, with the blood slowly mounting to his face. “’Tis Dr. Helot’s.”

“I am his daughter,” said Lalage, colouring violently.

“And I, his pupil,” answered Singleton. “Let us come in !”

CHAPTER VII.

The nonchalance of boys . . . is the healthy attitude of human nature.

EMERSON : *Essay on Self-Reliance*.

A TALL gentleman, in black, portly and commanding, with a white neckcloth wrapped round his neck like a wisp of straw, received him. This was Dr. Helot. He was profoundly courteous to Singleton ; for this was part of his system. The Doctor treated all his boys "like gentlemen," and caned them with dignity.

" You found Mr. Fontenoy looking for the gate, eh, Lalage?" he said.

" Yes, papa," said Lalage, hesitatingly.

" Glad to see you, Mr. Singleton," said the

Doctor. "Walk in here, and I will introduce you to Mrs. Helot." Here he led the way to a parlour, in which a middle-aged lady in spectacles was sitting at a big book. Singleton observed that she used a snuff-box.

"My dear,—Mr. Singleton Fontenoy." Singleton bowed, and made some considerable impression. The fact is, that he had come to school a great deal too late for "moulding," as the process of warping youth is amusingly called. He had read a great deal too much, for the intellectual part of it, and as for the other, he had been always, for the last few years, brought into contact with people of the world. What a stride a man's mind makes, even by going to one or two parties! Singleton saw at a glance that Mrs. Helot was a worthy person, not quite *comme il faut*, and he could hardly help laughing, when, glancing to observe the Doctor, he thought what Mr. Frederick Lepel would have said of him,—Frederick, who did not condescend to quote a classic, except for the purpose of making a pun. Singleton sat down very coolly in the awful presence, talked away, when they opened

a subject, and comported himself more like a guest than a pupil. Mrs. Helot soon displayed her learning, and he soon saw how Lalage had acquired her strange knowledge and ideas. Ah, Lalage was a sweet puzzle; so fair and so dreamy; so romantic and so innocent, simple, and cool. Poor Lalage! she was a genius, and she belonged at the same time to the Doctor's "Virgil class." Singleton stared next morning as she came in, stationed herself with unaffected simplicity and modesty in her place, and went on with the dull task.

Meanwhile, while Singleton was with the family, the rumour spread through the school that the "new boy" had come. Oaken Lodge had two departments for its boys,—the school-room for the elder; and the boys' parlour for the younger.

Singleton was conducted in the evening into the "school-room," for which he was judged old enough. There he found a group of youngsters assembled round a fire-place, and cooking slices of raw potato upon fragments of broken plate. They were most of them gentlemanly fellows, but horribly rough. In

one corner of the room stood a venerable pulpit, where the Doctor presided during the day; four huge, long desks, with iron rails, adorned the body of the apartment. The white-washed walls were grotesquely adorned with figures, done in charcoal and with black-lead pencils. Singleton thought of Heatherby, and then of Dunreddin; then of Augusta, then of the George Inn, in Huskdale; then of Lalage, and reconciled himself to his fate. So, smiling (and like Pisistratus Caxton, he had a pleasant laugh), he moved up to the fire-place, and put himself into friendly relations with his schoolfellows. Jack Selwyn, than whom no boy in Oaken Lodge was cleverer or more caned, made room for him. On the other side, was Harry Temple, a "dreadful" youth, who broke the knees of his father's horses during the holidays, and who made wanton allusions to Mrs. Helot, which turned the younger boys pale. These two governed public opinion in Oaken Lodge. They received Singleton very kindly, mentally agreed that he was a neat looking fellow, thought he was doosed old to come to

school, and wondered whether he was a muff. They were conducting a dialogue when he came in, which the other fellows were listening to with respectful attention.

"I tell you she's forty," said Temple. "She came out in —18. I've a brother in the 110th, (ah, you fellows should see him,—'gad he's too proud to speak to the governor,) who told me so."

"It's Sapphini we were talking about," said Selwyn, turning to Fontenoy.

"Oh yes, she sang at a town near me," answered Singleton,—"*Huskdale*, not long ago. I met her at supper." The fact was, that Lepel had taken him there, one night, in company with a Parisian author, who was visiting our manufacturing districts, whom he knew.

Here was a hit! Singleton's reputation was established.

"You ain't joking?" said Selwyn, who had all a schoolboy's suspicion of anything that looked like an attempt to humbug him.

"No; why should I?" asked Singleton, innocently.

"By George, I shouldn't wonder, if you knew how to smoke!" cried Temple, enthusiastically.

Singleton laughed, had tried a cigar, dared say it was a quiet amusement for a leisure hour.

"I thought so. I began with returns," said Temple, lowering his voice, as if he was afraid the Doctor would hear him. "I then got on to bird's-eye,—but Lord bless you, Selwyn, there, smokes shag, sir; he does, upon my word."

At this moment, some of the potatoes on the elegant cooking apparatus, gave signs that they were ready for consumption, and they were removed accordingly. Selwyn handed some to Singleton, who partook of them, with considerable amusement.

"The worst of school is ' remarked Temple, "that one can't get anything to drink. Old Helot gives us good enough dinners; I don't grumble at them, but we ought to have wine."

"I wonder whether they have sent my luggage from Penguin," said Singleton.

"Jack Roberts, go and see," said Selwyn, to

one of the boys, who flew instant. He returned, carrying a brown parcel. The luggage had come, and this was part of it. They all crowded round, as Singleton proceeded to open it. There was a note, just on the surface. Singleton had not seen his things packed, so felt some curiosity to know what this was, and why it was there. It was in the handwriting of Frederick Lepel, and ran as follows :

“Dear Singleton,

“I never was at school—thank God—or I should have been as ignorant as the mass of people. But I suppose, it's like most places, requiring all the consolations of philosophy. Among these the ‘good things of this world’ as heavy people call them, must decidedly rank. So, I have made you up a little parcel of them, for your private use. There, you dog! Don't ever say that the materialists are apt to be selfish, again! Good bye, you have read too much. Open your eyes and look about you. I'm off to a blue-book. Yours,

“FREDERICK LEPEL.”

Singleton smiled, as he perused this cha-

racteristic note, and then proceeded amidst a general hum of expectation to unpack the parcel. Off came one layer of brown paper. There was a pause. Off came another. The excitement grew intense. Off came a third, and disclosed two large brown bottles, a tin case, some little pots, and a paper of cigars. There was a burst of astonishment.

"Jack Roberts," cried Selwyn "run and bolt the door." The boy bounded like a deer.

"What's the matter?" asked Singleton, seeing the movement, and the excited state of the little colony.

"Oh, by George, Fontenoy," said Selwyn, "you must be green. Do you suppose old Helot would stand that? He thinks it's a cake you've got in the parcel. I can't fancy who the doose put these things up for you. My governor would'nt. Catch him!"

"Well," said Singleton, coolly, "we will see what they are. Have you a corkscrew?"

This produced a laugh. No such thing was known in the school-room. "Well,—a knife?"

A knife was brought. He seized one of the bottles, held it in a slanting position,

and decapitated it, as neatly as Louis XVI. This increased his popularity, enormously. A grateful aroma came forth.

"Boys," cried Selwyn, with the impressiveness becoming the occasion, "if any of you says a word about what's done here, this evening, I'll lick him. Remember I'll keep my word."

Singleton laughed, and poured some of the liquid into a mug, bearing the word "John" in gold letters, and handed it to Selwyn, who assumed the tone of a connoisseur, with an air that would have delighted Mr. T——.

"By George," said Selwyn, "it's a liqueur. It's Curaçoa!" He smacked his lips. "This refreshes a man, in this hole! It's good too." The little boys looked at each other, with wonder, and one or two glanced at the door, uneasily. "What would the boys' parlour fellows think if they knew it?" The novelty of all this amused Singleton exceedingly. He proceeded to administer small doses of the liqueur to the crowd.

"Does liqueur make people tipsy?" said Selwyn.

“ Stuff,” said Temple ; “ of course not.”

“ You had better hide these things in a safe place,” said Selwyn.

Shortly afterwards, the time when it was necessary to go to bed arrived, and Singleton had to sleep in the same room with Selwyn and Temple. The illicit supplies were carefully concealed. Singleton thought his bed a miserable little crib. When he woke he missed the luxurious conveniences he had been accustomed to at home ; but when we are young we can all be hardy if we like, however we may have been brought up.

“ You must rough it out, old fellow,” said Selwyn.

“ Violets can grow anywhere,” Singleton replied. The bell rung ; they bounded down stairs. The Doctor had taken his place in the pulpit, and the day began as usual by the reading of prayers.

Then the Doctor proceeded to examine Singleton, that he might place him in a class. Singleton had come to school, as Gibbon says he went to Oxford, “ with a stock of erudition that might puzzle a doctor, and a degree of

ignorance, of which a schoolboy might be ashamed." The Doctor was somewhat surprised, and a little puzzled, accordingly. Singleton would bungle at an irregular verb, that Selwyn knew in painful detail, but Singleton had read the disputes about the Homeric poems, and was very well acquainted with all sorts of theories. His peculiar education made him quite a phenomenon in Oaken Lodge. The Doctor placed him in the "Virgil class"—next Lalage. It was quite a picture to see the fair Lalage assuming her place in the morning, and going through the regular number of lines. None of the boys thought it anything remarkable ; even Masters Selwyn and Temple, the leaders of the school, never alluded to her, except as in the "Virgil class." As yet, they were in that stage when females generally are rather a subject of puerile contempt than otherwise ; and when precocity displays itself in an affection for the ruder vices, and a respect for jockeys and gamekeepers. As for the Doctor, who was pedantic in everything but what related to his dinner, he looked on his daughter as a most

promising scholar, and probably thought it a pity that he could not send her to Oxford to take a degree.

The very first day, Singleton had an opportunity of seeing discipline enforced in the orthodox way. Selwyn had, with the liveliness which distinguished him, overset a desk, and with the impudence which sometimes accompanies liveliness, laughed at the doctor's remonstrance. Dr. Helot descended from the pulpit, armed with his cane, approached Selwyn, buttoned up his coat, took a pinch of snuff to refresh himself, and then seizing the youth by the collar, commenced a hearty castigation. Singleton, who had never before witnessed the chastisement of anything but a pointer, felt a thrill of anger and degradation. Selwyn received the blows with Spartan indifference, and as soon as the doctor's back was turned, winked to the boys near him, to their intense delight and amusement.

The "Virgil class" came up that afternoon, at their usual hour. Singleton looked over the book with Lalage. His translating pleased the Doctor. It was accurate enough, and

then it was graphic sometimes, which cheered the old gentleman, who was glad of a change from the dry formal style of rendering which he was accustomed to hear, in his dreary *post mortem* examinations of the text, day after day.

When school was over, the boys of Oaken Lodge had liberty to go wherever they pleased, for several hours, and Singleton availed himself of this to roam over that wild country, with its deep, bright, swift rivers, pregnant with the life of the North ; and to wander by the banks of those broad lakes worthy to reflect the blue skies—rivers and lakes which he did not afterwards forget—by the waters of the degenerate Scamander, or among the gardens of the land of the rising sun !

In a short time, he felt that the rude life at school was doing him good. He grew less dreamy ; he grew stronger and healthier. Our training must be rough, if we would be fit for the work of the world, and contented with its daily life.

To dine with a relish at the *Syssitia*, we must first bathe in the Eurotas !

CHAPTER VIII.

But how this love came to be produced in me so early is a hard question !

COWLEY, *Essay on Myself*.

IN a short time, the Doctor's experienced eye taught him that Master Singleton Fontenoy was gaining a great ascendancy over the other boys. Fortunately for all parties, the supplies sent him by his friend Lepel were consumed without any dangerous result. Selwyn was afflicted with a settled melancholy for a few days after their disappearance, but he recovered. Temple, having attained his favourite ambition, to be able to smoke "shag," had some thoughts of trying opium, which he believed a higher flight, but Singleton dissuaded

him. Both these youths thought Singleton a capital fellow, and Selwyn made a point of ostentatiously walking with his arm round his neck directly after school was over. This gave Singleton fashion.

His influence was easily accounted for. First of all, there arrived one morning a copy of the "Huskdale Courier," with an account of the great meeting at which he had been present; and Singleton was astonished to find himself mentioned as "one of the gentlemen we observed on the platform." He showed this to Selwyn. Selwyn preserved his calmness as became the dignity of the Cock of the School, but was obviously deeply impressed by it. The paper was handed round; the boys were delighted with it. It was kept, however, carefully out of sight of the Doctor. The speech of the ambitious Frederick was reported at great length in the columns, and specially recommended to public perusal in a leader, which, curiously enough, bore some resemblance to the style of the speech itself—at least Singleton thought so. "Tremendous cheers" were put in at due intervals.

Singleton told Selwyn that this was the Frederick who had sent the supplies. Selwyn replied, that it was just what might be expected from such a doosed clever fellow. Temple hoped he might never want a regalia. Both, however, agreed that it was a pity he stuck up for the snobs, under which name they comprehensively included all who were not "gentlemen's sons." Singleton was amused at their political zeal. He began to see what advantage he had derived from his different culture. Brought up by themselves, boys will learn to think soonest. In fact, Singleton found he *learned* little or nothing at Oaken Lodge. The use of the place to him was more that of a gymnasium than of an academy. But it did him good; and most of all, by its bringing him in contact with these boys. He had no time to dream when he was at cricket.

In spite of the hate of learning which is all that at so many schools boys learn, they have a kind of respect for it. Singleton was liked for his proficiency in knowledge, perhaps as much as for anything else. He had a knack of writing (as they called it) which was found

very serviceable in the production of themes; and of these, he sometimes turned out a dozen orthodox specimens—with an old quotation and all, complete—in the course of an evening. He crammed many of the fellows in their tasks, and in fact it soon began to be popularly believed that Singleton Fontenoy knew as much as the Doctor. This was a dangerous and deadly heresy. Then, Singleton had not yet been caned. Some of the boys started a notion that the Doctor was afraid to cane him. From that time his position was critical. One or two, who were jealous of him, shook their heads, and whispered knowingly, "Time would show," "Perhaps he'd stand a caning as well as anybody."

While this was a matter of speculation, an affair happened which seemed likely to bring it to a speedy decision. The Doctor's edition of *Æschylus* will be remembered. Well, at the time that celebrated work appeared (which was before Singleton's day) the "Pimlico Review" was in all its glory. The "Pimlico Review" had been started originally to support the Church (which it did in a most unchristian

style), and to maintain the cause of aristocracy, which it did by employing the language of Billingsgate. Dr. Helot having, unhappily, a leaning towards Whiggism, the Pimlico Reviewers found out that he knew no Greek, and, in fact, massacred the work with the most unscrupulous ferocity.

One day, Frederick Lepel, hunting up old books at Dunreddin, in a leisure hour, dropped upon this number, and with his customary love of amusement, forwarded it to Singleton, at Oaken Lodge. The boys, who now learned for the first time that their preceptor had been an author, were charmed with the article. The Doctor was treated in it with a contempt which they of course thought exquisitely amusing. Selwyn perched himself, one afternoon, shortly after its arrival, upon a pump in the playground, and began reading it out aloud to an admiring audience.

“Listen here, my boys,” cried Selwyn, who had been caned that morning, and consequently was just in the humour for the performance :

“As to this man Helot’s (listen to that!) remarks on the Ellipsis, they are quite on a

par with the rest of the performance—fatiguing from their dulness, and offensive from their ignorance.’” (There was a great laugh at this, when suddenly a voice cried, “The Doctor! the Doctor!”) “Now, my boys,” Selwyn was going on, when the portly figure of Dr. Helot was observed coming up. He had divined from their gestures, that something which partook of the nature of mischief was going forward, and he held in his hand that cane which had so long preserved discipline in Oaken Lodge.

“What have we here?” he asked, approaching the pump. Selwyn jumped down, amidst the eager glances of the crowd of awestruck boys, and handed it to him. The Doctor, who was short-sighted, held up the book to look at it, close to his eyes. One little boy tittered—he could not help it. He was a comic writer in embryo!—The Doctor’s eye caught him. He caned *him* as a preliminary. He then took a long look at the book,—shut it,—opened it again,—shut it—took a pinch of snuff. Perhaps that reminiscence of the olden time, in spite of its nature, suggested pleasant thoughts! Perhaps, it brought to the old pedagogue’s

heart, a tender recollection of the day when he first met Mrs. Helot, and the black past was perhaps lighted by that light!

At all events, he took the book down from his eyes, and held it in his hand by his side, very quietly, without any of the abrupt gestures of indignation which his pupils expected. They could not understand his feelings. But Singleton, with the quickness of sympathy of which I have spoken before, did, and felt a pang of compunction.

"Who gave you this?" said the Doctor to Selwyn, very quietly.

Singleton came forward to anticipate him. ("Now for it," thought some of the boys.) "I did, Sir," he said, calmly.

The Doctor paused, as if in doubt. Singleton felt that he was perhaps more hurt than angry. So he added, "It was sent to me, without my wish or knowledge." ("Ah, the sneak!" thought the jealous boys. Boys misunderstand one, almost as much as men.)

The Doctor said, "I will retain it for the present," and walked away. The boys looked at each other.

"I say, old fellow," said Selwyn to Singleton, "he's only waiting for a chance, now, to give it you!"

Singleton laughed, and coloured.

"Will you stand it?" asked one of the boys.

Singleton saw, from the curiosity with which they all looked up at him, as the inquiry was made, that something was expected from him, out of the common way. Here was a dignified crisis!

It now became the engrossing question in Oaken Lodge—when Singleton Fontenoy would be caned? Was the Doctor afraid?

Meanwhile, Singleton stood next Lalage in the "Virgil class," as usual. They looked over the same book. How Singleton loved that dull task! Delightful contiguity! There was something in his affection for Lalage which he could not understand. It was different from the reverential, familiar kindness he felt towards Augusta Lepel. It had none of the heat which had transiently radiated through his moral atmosphere when the fair Circe crossed his orbit. Never had he attempted

such a metaphysical problem as its explanation! It was spiritual more than ardent. It was a flirtation of the soul. He thought often of what she had said to him,—“we do not wake.” These were pleasant mornings, when Singleton stood by her side, reading Virgil; and fancied that her breath was an air from the Elysian Fields, of which the poet spoke.

One morning Singleton had committed some slight offence, and was ordered to learn by heart a hundred lines of Persius—a poet who, perhaps, has never been understood properly since he wrote, by anybody but Casaubon. (He has been edited often enough, to be sure, but that has nothing to do with it.) Singleton was summoned to repeat them. He would probably have been in a difficulty, when Lalage, gliding past the pulpit, dexterously fastened a piece of paper to it; Singleton saw that it contained several of the lines suggestively arranged; by cautiously glancing at them, now and then, he got through the task safely. Pleasant Lalage! Had her father become cognizant of this, the caning question would probably have been

settled for ever. The worthy Doctor, perhaps, was scarcely conscious that his daughter was pretty, and in his care that she should be a scholar, had forgotten that she was a girl.

Now for a scene ;—and the sequel.

In Oaken Lodge, there was a garden ; in the garden, a shrubbery ; in the shrubbery, a summer-house. In the summer-house, sat Lalage. It was a cold but sunny morning. She had a book in her hand, which she played with, occasionally, as if it were a fan.

The dead leaves on the gravel-walk fluttered. Singleton came in. They used to meet here, now and then—to prepare the lesson of the day. But the Doctor did not know this instance of their zeal.

“Good morning, Lalage. Let me wrap your shawl round you.”

“Are you cold?”

“Not while I am with you.”

“What will you do, when you are away?” asked Lalage, simply. Singleton had never thought of that. All he knew was, that he had a feeling for her, something between friendship and his love of the Pleiades.

"I cannot think of that." Lalage broke into a laugh. Singleton thought of lilies.

"What are we reading, this morning?" he said, with a smile.

"The same as usual," said Lalage, with a blush.

"I wonder what the Naiads were!" said Singleton, opening a topic.

"It's a curious subject," said Lalage, absently. They were advancing in their usual style! And there now occurred one of those fatal pauses, which used to embarrass them exceedingly.

"I have been speculating lately on the ancient mythology," said the erudite Singleton, looking at Lalage, and colouring—though he could not understand why. "I do not believe in the theory which would have it that they deified the operations of nature—that, for example, corn became Ceres; or fountains, because they were beneficent, Nymphs. They deified themselves, I think. For example, Lalage, I think that some girl, like you, (excuse the illustration, for the sake of philosophy!) looked, one day, into a fountain, saw herself there, and,

naturally enough, believed that it was a Naiad!"

"Do you, really?" said Lalage, with great simplicity. "Perhaps it was so." Lalage was the most delightful of pedants. She was very grave and very pretty. To adopt an appropriate illustration,—she was an Elzevir edition of Minerva.

"Lalage," said Singleton, after a little. "You know what the *Sortes Virgilianæ* are, don't you? You dip into Virgil at random, and the first sentence your eye catches, has a prophetic reference to your destiny.

"The Persians have the same idea, and try it with Hafiz," said Lalage.

"Well, give me the Virgil, and we will try our fate," pursued Singleton, gently taking the book from her hand. Their fingers met, and they both blushed and laughed again.

At this moment, the bell rang for school, but they neither of them heard it.

Singleton took the volume. "Don't do it!" said Lalage, turning a little pale.

"Pshaw, Lalage," he said, "are you so superstitious?" He looked at her. She had lost her colour a little, and how beau-

tiful her rich blue eyes looked in contrast with the delicate pallor of her cheek!

He took the book in his left hand. He opened it suddenly,—and Lalage saw him blush and laugh again.

“What is it, Singleton?”

“Oh, nothing. What a stupid custom it is!” Lalage saw that he had popped upon these apt words in the 8th Eclogue:

. . . “quid non speremus amantes?”

What may not we lovers hope!

Singleton flung down the book on the seat, and was silent. But Lalage coloured and looked grave . .

“It was only fun,” said Singleton, demurely, and fearing that she was a little shocked. But it was a more serious feeling that poor Lalage had! Suddenly, her eyes seemed to double in lustre, and Singleton saw a few bright tears on her cheek. At that sight an electric emotion affected him. His boyish playfulness was gone. He seized her hand, and pressed it to his lips, and he felt his heart throb, as if it were growing.

. . . There was a noise of voices, a rattling

on the gravel walk, a trampling and a hum ! They started, and in an instant they saw from their summer house—Dr. Helot, Mrs. Helot,—the usher,—a servant maid, and a throng of eager, astonished boys approaching ! It was a crisis. The Doctor arrived first, with his wondering train behind him !

He uttered no word. He quietly laid his hand on Singleton's shoulder, and walked him away. The boys in silent expectation, scarcely breathing in the intensity of their excitement, attended them. There was a faint cry behind, which Singleton knew to be Lalage's voice. At that sound he felt an emotion,—but it was not fear.

The party gained the school-room. The door was shut. The usher, a small, vulgar man who had never liked Singleton, took his seat. Singleton felt a determined tranquillity. It was a moment of sublime emotion. Every nerve in his body was screwed up to a pitch of intensity of which he could not have believed his constitution capable. The eyes of all the boys were upon him, and they saw the dark

pupils of his blue eyes dilate, and beam with a tranquil fire. Now was the time. His reputation in the school for ever, depended upon his conduct now.

The Doctor looked round the room, and placed Singleton in the middle of the floor. Then he took down his cane from its well known place, buttoned up his coat, took snuff, and drew a long breath.

“You have promoted insubordination in this school,” said the Doctor, “you have assumed a position incompatible with your place as a pupil; and you have dared to tamper with the feelings of my little girl Lalage.”

“Your two first assertions are false, but let them pass. Your last is false, and I repudiate it with disgust and disdain,” said Singleton, his shrill voice ringing through the room, in tones that made many a heart beat high.

The Doctor made a kind of rush towards him with his cane. Singleton sprung at it, snatched it, flung it through the window like a Parthian arrow. By a lucky chance, there was a heavy ruler near him: he seized it, and bounded on

a desk. The boys near him made way. The Doctor advanced towards him.

“Wretched pedant!” cried Singleton, “if you dare disgrace me by your touch, by the God whose image you would profane, I will lay you lifeless!”

The Doctor stood speechless for a moment. Then recovering himself, and drawing himself up, he said—

“You are mad. You can stay here no more : you are expelled !”

There was a movement of astonishment through the school.

“You may come down,” said the Doctor, calmly ; “I will not touch you.”

Singleton gave a short, bitter laugh. He descended, and flung the ruler down.

“You must associate with these boys no more,” pursued Dr. Helot. “Till you leave, you must stay elsewhere. Follow me.”

Singleton followed him mechanically ; for his passion was subsiding, and a cold, sickly feeling of disgust succeeding to it. They reached a room in another part of the building, a small, ill-furnished chamber, facing the back

part of the house ; and there he was left—alone, and locked in.

It was a dull apartment. He looked out of the window : his eye rested on a bleak paddock. The grass was short and scanty ; the hedges were bare and ragged ; the air was heavy and misty. Ever alive to external circumstances, and apt from his organization to be the slave of a cloud, or the lover of a rose, he was acutely affected by the melancholy picture. And the revulsion was coming upon him. He began to feel that dull *groundswell* of the emotions, heavy, tedious, and sickly, that comes after a storm of passion : he gazed out of the window, feeling his hot brow chilled by the cold touch of the glass.

How the glorious fancies of his youth had been profaned by his anger ! All the poetry he knew seemed to reproach him for such vulgar emotion. This was his first attempt at Action ; and what a degradation !—A schoolboy's rebellion against a pedagogue's rod ! “ Oh brave ! ” And what of Lalage ? The thought was too much for him : he put his hands to his face and wept ; he pined and sickened in his miserable little room.

We are surrounded, after all, by the elements of comedy : every Ophelia's grave has its gravedigger. Singleton looked round the room for a book ; he found one. By a refinement of cruelty, unworthy of our age, the only book in that chamber was Dr. Helot's *Æschylus* ! Singleton, as he picked it up, burst into a laugh. He looked into the Latin preface, which, like compositions of the kind, was made up in a Harlequin style, of patches of Latinity from the old authors.

While drearily perusing this, he heard something strike one of the panes of the window. He ran to it, and flung it up. Scarcely had he done so, when a stone flew past him, in, and fell upon the floor. He picked it up ; it was wrapped round with white paper ; he unrolled it, and read the following :—

“ You're a brick ! I always said so. Jonesby thought perhaps not : I said, certain. Old Helot's quite floored : *Pallidus irā*, as the grammar says. We're carving it on the desks. Where will you stop at Penguin for the coach ? *Somebody* wants to know. I am silent : real oak never *splits*. S.”

In this brief effusion, he had no difficulty in recognising the genius of his friend Selwyn. The *somebody* must be Lalage. Come what might, he could not leave the county without seeing her again.

He recollected a pretty little inn in Penguin, called "The Nightingale's Nest," which, being of a fanciful nature, he had stopped at, solely because it was so named. He had a pencil in his pocket : he tore a blank leaf out of the *Æschylus*, wrote this name upon it, adding that he would *wait* there, and availed himself of the stone to throw it out of the window. By this time it was getting dark. He had no fancy for sitting there in the dark, during a winter's night ; so he commenced a furious ringing at the bell, and rushed out of the door as soon as it was opened by the servant, who came to see what was the matter. Descending, he met the Doctor ; and coolly telling him that he was going, and that he should send for his luggage in the morning, rushed out of the house. No effort was made to detain so desperate a character ; and in a short time he found himself on the road to

Penguin—that road where, not very many weeks before, he had met Lalage.

Selwyn stole out after him, and running up, put his hand on his shoulder. Singleton was somewhat affected to see him, and shook hands with him heartily.

“Bravo, Fontenoy : you’re a good fellow. By Jove, how you gave it him ! But your governor won’t lick you when you get home, will he ?”

Singleton laughed at the bare idea of his dignified parent’s condescending to anything of the sort. For, indeed, Mr. Fontenoy, of Heatherby, though under certain circumstances he would have let a son starve, would have no more struck him than he would have voted to bring in a Whig for the county.

“No fear of that, Selwyn. I wish you could come with me : we should have capital fun.”

Selwyn shook his head mournfully.

“That’s no go, old boy, I’m afraid.”

He was one of nine children of a strict old general officer on half-pay, younger son of an ancient and honourable but poor family, and

was obliged to be very cautious and particular.

"Could you come on to Penguin, and be back in time for bed-time? He does not know you are with me?"

"Yes, I think so, if we make haste."

"Come along, then, and by Jove, I'll send a cold goose back to the school-room fellows for a present!" cried Singleton, and away they ran. They ran with the utmost speed, and were nearly out of breath by the time they reached the inn, having accomplished the journey by alternate fits of walking and running violently.

Singleton ordered some dinner and wine, and then they began to talk about Lalage. Selwyn was quiet and sensible, and rather surprised Singleton, by the tact and sense he showed in speaking on the matter. The truth is, he was one of those young gentlemen everywhere to be met with now-a-days, who take extraordinary pains, *not* to cultivate really promising abilities. I class the wasting of good talents among the decided phenomena of our day.

"Lalage would like to see you before you

go, I dare say. It's quite natural, and I don't see how it's improper. The Doctor is angry just now and unreasonable. If she did not see you, she would likely pine and mope; if she does, you bid her good bye, and part with a fair understanding. Lalage's a good girl," said the youthful Selwyn, thoughtfully. "I don't understand her myself." He was silent, and Singleton thanked him.

Dinner was brought. Selwyn had dined, but attacked some wine, and went on talking with many an anxious look at the clock. Time was jogging on. Selwyn's eyes twinkled pathetically, as he sipped his wine.

"I wish I was like you, old fellow. Somehow what I've learnt at old Helot's, isn't the same use to me. Hang it, I should like to do some good—Well, we shall see. I think I must be going," he said, for the tenth time; and then hesitating, blushing, and blundering, as the English always do, when they are going to say a sincere and affectionate thing. He went on. "I'm sorry to part with you, old boy. I always liked you from the first. The fact is, do you know,—you're a little like a sister of mine in the

face!" Singleton blushed, and laughed merrily. They got the cold roast goose, and wrapped him in ample folds of newspaper. Singleton made Selwyn take a parting glass of wine, accompanied him to the door, shook hands,—and away went his school friend.

He returned in a gloomy mood to the coffee-room. Two gentlemen (commercial gentlemen that is), had stationed themselves before the fire, and drawn up their chairs to make themselves comfortable. Both had bushy and glossy whiskers; both wore showy trousers with very wide stripes. They talked party politics, and discussed the corn laws fluently enough. They abused the landlords, and inveighed against rents. They sneered at the Church, and panegyricised the cotton trade. Each had read the *Corn Law Catechism*, and had heard of Bentham. Each had a fluent tongue, and great hardihood of assertion:—so that, for aught I know to the contrary, each may by this time, be a "leader" of the people, and looking to a seat in the Cabinet.

They made room for Singleton with much politeness. He sat down by the fire, glad to

get a chance of escaping from the tyranny of his thoughts.

"Things are very bad in the North, sir," said one of the travellers, civilly.

"I am afraid so," Singleton replied.

"And particularly in Rockshire," (this was Singleton's county). "Nothing but turnings out, stopped mills, and riots."

"Ah, the landowners there is a bad lot," said the other traveller, (Singleton winced slightly.) "I know the country well, from Bleartown to Huskdale."

"I have often thought it a pity, that the aristocracy do not take more pains to assert their position and discharge its duties," said Singleton, thoughtfully.

"Oh, their day's gone by, gone by, sir," said the first speaker, shaking his head with a calm smile.

"Why gone by?" said Singleton. "I see no reason why it should be gone by, more than the day of the merchant or the lawyer. Their race is not degenerate any more than those of the other classes in the nation. They have great property which cannot be taken

from them, more than that of the cotton lords or the bankers. Their order is acquiring a perpetual accession of strength. What they want is an impulse from within."

"But the institution, sir."

"What of it?" asked our hero, who was at that age, when we sometimes get pugnacious in argument, whether our heart be in the cause or not.

"Why,—it had its origin in barbarous times."*

"As to that," said Singleton, quickly, and tossing off a thimble-full of sherry with the air of a large proprietor, "as to origin in barbarous times—so had religion, so had monarchy, so had filial affection, oratory, and law, and half the divine things the world possesses. The question is, what are barbarous times? Besides, aristocracy has changed its forms since then, and is adapting itself to new times: and the spirit of it being true or profoundly natural (which is the same thing) a change in form is all that is necessary to it. Why, factories and their institutions had their

* See GODWIN's book on political philosophy.

origin in what you call civilized times, and pretty institutions they are!"

"To look at it in the abstract;" began the traveller, with a corn-law-lecturer air.

"Why not in the concrete?" said Singleton, wickedly.

The traveller's face assumed a puzzled expression; but he recovered himself, and began a long harangue. Singleton's eyes were fixed on the fire. A strange feeling came over him. The red coals seemed swimming. Suddenly, he fancied he saw Lalage in the room. A wondrous oblivion succeeded:—something touched him on the shoulder. He started up. The fire was low. A waiter was by his side. The travellers' chairs were empty!

"It's nearly twelve o'clock, sir. Your bedroom's quite ready."

Oh, Jupiter! Oh, Somnus! Oh, shameful want of breeding! Oh, gross dereliction of gentlemanly duty! The youth of my hero must be his excuse, for this breach of all politeness. He had fallen asleep, in the middle of the traveller's harangue!

Three days passed, and Singleton was still in "The Nightingale's Nest." His luggage had arrived next morning, and no doubt Dr. Helot thought that he had long since departed for Huskdale, per coach. But Singleton, we see, still lingered. He could not go about much, for fear the Doctor should hear that he was in the neighbourhood. So he stayed in, read the newspapers, scribbled verses, wrote to his friend Fred Lepel, and looked at himself in the glass.

But "Nemesis favours genius," as Mr. Disraeli has it, and as any one may learn who chooses, as Juvenal says,

. unum civem donare Sibyllæ*

To add one reader to his "Sybil's" lot.

(a pun which is at the service of any diner-out of the higher class.) On the fourth day, the landlady, a portly, and what is called a "motherly" female, that is to say, she was big enough to whip ten children efficiently, came to Singleton with a smile of mystery, and whispered that a young lady was asking for

* Juvenal, Sat. iii. 3.

him. Singleton blushed fire, and stammered out a muttered request for some room to see her in.

"My own parlour has a fire in it," said the landlady, in a kindly tone, and led the way to a neat little room, where Singleton waited with the most intense anxiety and nervousness.

In came Lalage. What a smile, and how rosy she looked! The weather was very cold, but no frost could blight the roses in her cheek, any more than it could the violets in her eyes.

"How are you?" said Singleton, delighted, and she came up to the fire, and took her pretty white hands out of her muff, and warmed them there.

"Hush," said Lalage, "I have come to Penguin, on business for papa. He thinks you are away."

"This is very sad, Lalage," said Singleton, with a mournful air.

Lalage sat down, and pushed back her bonnet, so that her brown ringlets tumbled forward. She smiled a little, and Singleton long remembered the peculiar sweetness that

played across her mouth. But it vanished immediately, and she spoke.

"I came determined to preserve my calmness, she said, sadly, "but I cannot pretend that I am not very sorry we are to part."

"Thank you, Lalage. I wish I could express how miserable I am. I was right when I said we were both dreamers. We have wandered among the Elysian shades, and we are passing out of the ivory portal."

"Ah, we shall never discuss a lesson again!" said Lalage.

"I shall never forget what I have learned from you," said Singleton.

"The future is all dark," said Lalage.

"We are both young. You stand to me for all that is divine in nature. You are to me a religion. I shall turn towards you when I kneel to pray," said Singleton.

And so these young dreamers proceeded. Fools will think they were mad, but wise men will see that they were only unfortunate. For wise men dream, and fools only snore.

"Lalage, I love you with my soul. I plight

you my faith. A little time and we shall meet again."

They joined hands.

An hour had passed. It was over, and Lalage was gone.

Singleton sat by himself and mused. He had nothing to detain him now in this part of the world, so he determined to go home, and accordingly took his place in that night's coach to Huskdale.

It was winter, and such a bitter winter as is only seen in these northern regions. The roads were almost paved with hard and glittering ice, and dark and wild they seemed to him as he was whirled along, save where the roaring fire of some blacksmith's forge cast a red glare upon the way.

The moon rose, sharp, clear, and of a pale gold. Singleton saw through the coach windows one of the most beautiful appearances of external nature, moonlight upon snow. Moonlight on the sea is rich, various, and brilliant; on the snow it has an appearance exquisitely delicate, but melancholy. It lights and tinges with a tender hue, the cold masses which it

cannot melt. Beautiful and ineffectual type of a higher heavenly light, that so often falls powerless on the world!

Singleton, whose only fellow-passenger inside, was a benevolent and intellectual looking old gentleman a quaker of Kendal, slept during the night, miserably and restlessly. In the morning his companion, after the interchange of a few civil phrases, said smilingly,

“Thou thinkest much of the ancients, young friend?”

“I scarcely know,” answered our hero, surprised, “why?”

“Thou didst frequently murmur ‘Lalage’ last night.”

Singleton coloured, and muttered something about “dreams.”

His eyes were dull and heavy. Poor boy! He had been crying in his sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

But thou,—what dost thou here,
In the old man's peaceful hall?

MACAULAY. *Prophecy of Capys.*

“FREDERICK,” said Mrs. Lepel to her hopeful son, “could not you make it convenient to receive that deputation to-morrow in the kitchen?”

Now the patriot ought to have been, considering his position and professions generally, rather indignant at this proposal, but he had far too keen a relish for fun to be anything of the sort. So he jumped from the ottoman where he was lounging with a book in his hand, and burst into a loud laugh. This laugh, indeed, was unusually hearty for Fred-

erick, and proved by that fact alone that it was indulged at somebody's expense. For he most enjoyed laughter, as Diogenes enjoyed wine, at the cost of others.

"Why, mamma, that would scarcely do, I am afraid. You are facetious this evening."

"Well, I tell you, Fred, the last deputation (so the servants say) was almost an irruption. The state of the parlour was something terrific. One member of the deputation in pointing out the beauties of your grandmother, whose portrait (one of Gainsborough's best) is over the fire-place, touched it with the end of his stick. If she had lived to see that company there!"

"And," added Augusta, "my Views of the East, which unfortunately lay on the table open, bear the mark of some gigantic thumb." And she laughed, for Augusta believing her brother quite earnest and honest in his political deeds, and being too sensible and too good to have any affectations which would interfere with what seemed right, bore no ill-will against the thumb in question, or its owner. Too good, I say, for it may be re-

marked that affectation as often comes from badness as from silliness of character ; and thus, reader, when you see a very affected person, besides being pretty sure (which you no doubt will be) that he is a fool, you may also feel tolerably certain that he is a rogue. Whence or wherefore ? Because mere vanity alone will not make a person affected ; for affectation implies a disregard of the feelings of others, and very often a thorough design to hurt them.

Frederick had become quite a public character. His speech at the great meeting had gone through the empire. Newspapers commented on him ; pamphleteers abused him. Although, of course, he could not expect to engage long the attention of the country, yet he made a far more intense impression on his own neighbourhood. In Huskdale, for example, he became a personage. The radicals thought they had discovered a new leader. The liberality of his sentiments made him popular. He even began to mix secretly with some of the more dangerous democrats, who are to be found in England, as well as in other

countries — Frenchmen who have invented pikes for resisting cavalry, and Polish refugees who have a project for blowing up Westminster Bridge, at a cost of ten and sixpence. There are many such strange characters to be met with by the philosophical, from enthusiasts who have arranged everything about the Provisional Government except how to establish it,—to calculators who propose to destroy the Oligarchy, by the agency of penny subscriptions. Now Frederick was only a radical “Nor.-Nor.-West.” In tendency, he certainly belonged to the “Manchester School,” but primarily he was neither a whig, tory, nor radical, but a Frederick Lepel. He loved progress, but he also loved himself; and perhaps would have cared little for the march of intellect, if he thought there was no chance of his being at the head of it, or at least carrying a colour. Then he had a due regard for his family position into the bargain, and though very indifferent to ancestry, birth, and so on, and quite careless about the possession of these advantages in his associates; still it was the fact, that he came from a very good family.

He could not help it. It was not his fault. But such was the fact, and people knew it.

In truth, perhaps, it may be said of this young gentleman, that, as some youths go to sea, not because nature at all destined them for sailors, but simply from a love of adventure, and a vague idea of doing something wonderful—so he embarked in agitation from a distaste for the regular hum-drum course of life. Since his return, he had seen quite enough of the young gentlemen in neat shooting-coats, who wandered about the country, with scarcely a question but “Do you hunt?” in their mouths, and scarcely an idea beyond it in their heads, to be quite sure that their society and occupations would not be sufficient for him. Then a great part of his youth, as we know, had been spent in travel, which had made him acquainted with remarkable men. His mind was powerful, and what is even more important, active. He had read and speculated a great deal.

The reader has doubtless set him down as without principle. But we must remember that now-a-days principle is a kind of ballast,

like the ballast in a balloon, which must be thrown overboard if the traveller wishes to rise. It keeps you steady, but it keeps you down. Again, it must not be supposed that he had no good points. He was very good-natured, and (to use the balloon illustration again) if he had found it necessary to throw you out after the ballast, he would have delayed it to the last moment, and treated you with the utmost kindness till the fatal time. If he was capable of vices, he had no meanness, and that is something to say for him in these days. Finally, we must remember the age in which he was born, and the circumstances disadvantageous to education set forth in the motto prefixed to this part of my work. These act differently on different minds, and while some are made by them only unhappy, others are made mischievous.

“Well, Fred, you will keep your friends in order, then,” said his mother, resuming the conversation.

Mr. Lepel, meanwhile, who had been snoozing on the sofa in a retired part of the room, woke up.

"Fred," he said, "have you thought over our conversation some time ago?"

"Yes," answered Frederick; "but the landed interest question must be deferred for the present."

His father looked at him rather hard and curiously. Frederick's face had a grave and serious expression.

"By the bye," continued Mr. Lepel, raising himself completely from his post-prandial nap, "By the by, Fred, I was having a good deal of talk about you to-day. There was Mr. Fontenoy, Mr. Beaconsfield, old Mr. Pierrepont, several other of the county people, and one Captain Slug from the —ths at Huskdale. They were talking about Rutter——"

"*Le pauvre homme!*" drawled Frederick, with a sneer.

"Well," pursued his father, with as near an approach to a *dry* smile as a very amiable countenance would permit, "they began to speak of your political *début*. Regard for the people they all thought well enough. But they thought it a pity you should have taken such a decided radical part, particularly"—here

Mr. Lepel's words received a slight emphasis,—"as, had your wish to enter public life been known, Lord Clangour might have done something for you."

Frederick's face was visited by a slight evidence of emotion.

"And particularly," continued his father, watching him curiously still, "as the chartists—a large section of the radicals, as you know—look with great jealousy on such *coups* from such as you, and are said to be moving about it."

Here Frederick began to grow more and more anxious.

"And still more," his father went on, impressively, "since, at all events, the movement caused by the bad state of the country is virtually at an end. For I have it on the best authority, that everything will be put to rights immediately; that the leaders of the meditated risings are to be seized and tried; that, in a word, the thing's done."

Frederick jumped to his feet, with a start. "You might, I think, have told me this before. I wish you all good night!" And so saying,

he left the drawing-room, and gained his own room. He presently, also, sent down word that he did not feel well; and next morning his indisposition appeared to exist still, for he was unable to see the deputation above-mentioned, which consisted of some operatives wishing his aid to found a literary institute in Huskdale, in opposition to the existing establishments of the same kind.

Curiously enough, he recovered in the afternoon, and came down stairs. He then set off to Huskdale, and made several calls upon political friends, from most of whom he heard accounts quite confirmatory of what his father had said the night before. The truth is, that the "crisis" was taking a favourable turn; and after various "strikes," "riots," "turns-out," and other phenomena of the saturnalia of labour, things were settling down into the old state once more, and the "difficulty" called "condition of England" was about to be postponed for another period of years.

Frederick, with his head full of disgust and disappointment, stepped out of a house in Mammon Street, where he had been having

a long conversation with one of the Town Council, a violent radical; and marched towards the office of the "Huskdale Courier," his apparent connexion with which had so astonished his friends Singleton, Farquhar, &c. But before he got there (where, as we shall see, bad news awaited him,) another disagreeable event happened. He was recognized by some groups of idlers, the chaotic elements of that extraordinary mass, a Huskdale mob, and violently hooted. The history of Huskdale, in a political point of view, is the history of mobs, (as Bulwer Lytton says that of Paris is). Somebody is always being hooted there, and all cannot bear that operation with the equanimity of Mr. Rutter, secure as he is in the consciousness of innocence, and a living of £2000 per annum.

It is a curious and certain fact, that of all classes of mankind, none despise the public so heartily, as demagogues and actors, who have no existence except by its breath. Frederick felt an emotion of disgust hard to describe at this sign of his declining popularity, and walked on with a curse sticking in his throat,

to which nothing but his usual hardihood of contempt prevented him from giving hearty utterance.

"'Gad," he muttered, as he gained another part of the town, "it is lucky I am no enthusiast, or this would sicken me pretty well! The '*aura popularis*!' pshaw! It smells like a drain!"

With knit brow, and iron sneer, he marched on towards the office of the "Huskdale Courier." We have mentioned that this was a leading liberal print, but the truth is, that though from long standing, it had a great name, its reputation of late had been its chief value. The rivalry of the "Ranter," whose democracy was of a darker hue, had damaged its sale. Frederick had with his usual energy, at the commencement of his career purchased this journal for the sum of £500, which he could not ask his father for, but which he had paid in the form of two bills of £250, one at three months, and another at six. He had talents for business, but he had a love of daring, for the sake of daring, which (and he was young yet we must remember,) had had a good deal to do

with this speculation. He had written in it for a few numbers, with considerable vigour and freshness, astonishing the steady old subscribers, by theories which they could not understand, and quotations which they could not translate.

He reached the door. The office was empty. He went up to the editorial room. It was bare! Startled and anxious, he ascended another pair of stairs, but was met by a body of men carrying the machine—the actual printing machine—down, piece by piece!

“Why—what the devil’s to do, here?” cried Lepel angrily.

At the sound of his voice, a young fellow who had been long employed in the office, came running to him. He was a poor honest drudge, who had owed his bread to work in this place, during several dynasties of editors. He was looking very frightened—

“Why, Tanner, what’s the matter?” asked Lepel.

“Can’t you see, sir? Oh! can’t you see,” he said, seeming on the verge of crying.

“What is it?”

"It's an excootion, sir," cried the poor fellow. Now, though he lost his bread by this event, it is a fact that he felt for Lepel's loss, and perhaps pitied him the most.

The true state of the case was this. Lepel had bought the affair in utter ignorance of a previous *lien* on the property, the existence of which had been fraudulently concealed from him by the vender! That enterprising trader having secured the bills, was speedily *non est inventus*. The mortgagee stepped in,—and *voilà tout!*

Some young men in Frederick's position would have raged and stormed—some would have been prostrated. Some would have gone away and got drunk; and some would have become maudlin. Frederick was Frederick still. Three words taught him the whole affair. He gave the calmest business directions to the men; saw the house gutted tranquilly. His genius and his courage remained calm and triumphant, amidst the ruins of the the first ambitious hopes of his youth. He saw, how completely he was done,—saw the villany of it,—laughed at what was comic in

it,—and changed his whole plans in a few moments' breathing time.

A quarter of an hour brought all the *employés* of the establishment round him. He seated himself on a small stool, which was left in one of the rooms, and very briefly addressed them. With pencil and a note book, he glanced over some small unsettled accounts. He paid them at once.

"I now," he said in his usual brief, terse way, "wash my hands of journalism, and I wash them clean."

The *employés* went away, melancholy, and admiring his coolness. Lepel was left alone, in the desolate house. He looked out of the windows, and saw the thick veils of smoke gloomily sailing over the town. "Curse the place!" he muttered. "I think I shall go to Paris again, for a month. A brave people these, who dare do nothing against a government of fools, but bluster and lie!"

Then he execrated the rogue who had swindled him,—but of course never considered whether his own projects had been right, when tried by a moral standard.

He suddenly heard a step in the room, and turning round, he saw there a figure he knew. This was a short, melancholy-looking man, in shabby black, originally a mute by profession, but who, being cursed with a literary taste, (than which nothing, by the way, can be more fatal to a small trader or labourer) had taken to writing. The former proprietors of the 'Courier' had retained his services at the rate of a dinner and two glasses of brandy and water daily, to do the leading article department. Lepel had degraded him to an inferior branch, for he did not admire his style, which, indeed, was tinged with the melancholy characteristic of his early avocations.

"What,— Mr. Lakker," said Lepel briskly, "come to arrange the funeral of the 'Courier' eh?"

"You are facetious, sir" said Lakker, mournfully; "This is a sad business.—And just as I meditated sir, asking you for the loan of half-a-sovereign in advance—which is now, of course," said Mr. Lakker, looking at him, with a hesitating glance—"impossible."

Lepel smiled, determined to make the

advance in question, but he mentally resolved to talk to Mr. Lakker for a little, first, as a matter of amusement and study. How much was kindness, how much wrong in this, the reader must decide for himself.

“I have certainly been nicely taken in, Mr. Lakker, but it can’t be helped. Now, what shall you do, Mr. Lakker, if it’s a fair question?”

Lakker, who had had some experience of life, saw that the half-sovereign was forthcoming, so went on in good spirits.

“I shall resume my proper department of literature, sir,” he said, raising himself a little.

“Ah, indeed!”

“Yes, sir—Epitaphs!”

“Epitaphs!—You surprise me.”

“Yes, sir—epitaphs—the true ‘sermons in stones’ Mr. Lepel! Who, sir, has ever wandered in our English churchyards, without perceiving the gross literary deficiencies of the surviving relatives of this realm! Not only is there an absence of that neatness of expression which distinguishes the high class of Epitaphs,

but there is, sir, almost constantly, a gross abundance of errors in sense and spelling. Is this decent? Is it respectful to the departed? Is it," said Mr. Lakker, becoming enthusiastic, "worthy of an enlightened age? Shall we be careful in our newspapers, and negligent on our tombstones? Shall we teach our peasantry spelling, and bury them without it? Shall we be learned by the fireside, and illiterate at the grave?—Sir, I early perceived this rank abuse, and I exerted myself to rectify it! I put myself in communication with various statuaries, and engaged to supply—for a proper but moderate remuneration—proper inscriptions."

Lepel was charmed. "You deserve great credit, upon my honour, Mr. Lakker" he said, "but give me an example. Is it not difficult to deal with such a variety of persons, as you must have to write epitaphs for, and, pardon me, are you not apt to repeat yourself?"

"Mankind is fallible," said Lakker, with a sigh. "Some people have thought so. Statuaries, Sir, I am sorry to say, have made the observation!"

"Neatness of expression, is rare, but very

delightful in such compositions," said Lepel, suggestively.

"You may say so, Sir." Here Mr. Lakker pulled out some papers from his pocket.— "For example, Mr. Lepel, Mary Boucher is a tradesman's daughter. I ask her character. I am told she was virtuous to an extraordinary degree. Do I state the plain fact? No. I write thus :

MARY BOUCHER.

WHOSE VIRTUES

DELIGHTED THE LIVES OF OTHERS,

AND ADORNED HER OWN.

"Neat, Sir, eh ?" said Mr. Lakker.

Frederick could have roared with laughter, "Capital, Mr. Lakker," he cried.

"It has its difficulties, Sir, this employment, like others. Some people expect far too much for the money. Widows are outrageous sometimes."

"But if the deceased has been outrageously bad, Mr. Lakker ?"

"There is the triumph of the art, Sir.—Ah," exclaimed the epitaph writer, "if I could write 'em in Latin, Sir ! That would bring in money !

So many people like to put an inscription over the defunct, that he could not have read if he had been alive !”

Lepel here looked at his watch, and saw that it was getting late, and he then gave Mr. Lakker a sovereign, saying that he might repay it any time ;—it was of no consequence ;—and so that gentleman seemed to think also, for he never, I believe, troubled himself on the subject afterwards !

It was about five, as Lepel sauntered away from the house, musing upon his position—upon the bills to be met—upon the sudden check, in short, that he had encountered, in the opening of his career. He began to think, that his ambition must find some other way ; but, this was a matter for long reflection. Meanwhile, he was young ! With brains, courage, and fortune, what need he care ? Then, it occurred to him, that there was something glorious even in difficulties. Perhaps also he had too much neglected pleasure—a dangerous but delightful thought.

His carriage became more erect ; his eye brightened ; he clenched his hand, and shook

his arm as he walked along. Drawing near the George, he saw a knot of young fellows assembled there at the entrance to the yard. They had been out hunting. One or two were in pink ; their faces were ruddy with health ; they talked away lightly and good-naturedly. They were smoking cigars, and discussing the run. "Would any of them change places with me?" thought Lepel, as he glanced at them. "Hang it, what's the good of brains, if one cannot get oneself envied!"

Meanwhile, the group observed him approaching. "There's Fred Lepel," said one of them.

"Indeed," said a dark young man, eagerly. "That's him, is it?" and he raised his eyeglass.

"Very clever, isn't he?"

"I believe so."

"Oh, of course. Ah, how are you Fred?" Here Lepel came up to them. He was apparently in capital spirits ; he was pleasant and talkative ; he inquired about the run. In short, he made himself as agreeable as possible.

"We have all been watching you lately,"

said the dark young man, with a slight bow.

“Oh,” said Lepel, carelessly. “Too much honour. I’ve been having a run. Capital pace, but nothing caught. I am going to drop politics, I think.”

The dark young man seemed more interested in this, than one would have expected. He started a little, and looked curiously at Lepel.

“Have you heard that the ‘Courier’s’ dead?” said Lepel, suddenly, for it had just occurred to him that he might as well set a proper story afloat on the subject, before rumours began to go round. “Its defunct, sir. The proprietor has levanted. There’s a screw loose, I believe.”

“Why, we thought,—” began one of the young men, hesitatingly. Lepel saw the forming sentence, while it was yet in the womb of time.

“That I had something to do with it, eh? There are always false rumours about; but never mind business. So you met at Gorse End, eh?”

The group now broke into two knots for a few moments. Lepel talked to Harry

Pierrepont, brother of the Ellen of whom mention has been made before.

Meanwhile one of the party said to the young man with the eye-glass, "Why do you bore yourself about his politics or projects, hang them?" For this was a youth who not caring to cultivate his own talents, was jealous of those who did. "Tush, tush, my good Langley, you do not know the world yet," said his companion.

"My sister is over with Augusta," said Pierrepont to Frederick.

"Oh indeed, it's very kind of her. By-the-bye, who's that fellow? We were not introduced," whispered Lepel.

"Were you not? That's a cousin of Belden Lord Clangour's son."

Lepel suppressed a "whew." It was awkward; for his recent proceedings must have appeared rather extraordinary to that family. He thought suddenly of the interest the youth had shown in what he said, and inwardly admired his tact.

Shortly afterwards he parted with these young gentlemen, and went home to dinner,

where everybody thought him in very high spirits ; so much so, that his father (who had of late been trying to study him) felt somewhat afraid that he had been playing some dangerous game, with dangerous success.

In the drawing-room he seated himself next Ellen Pierrepont, and having asked his sister to play something, commenced a low, whispering dialogue. Ellen was bending over a beautiful volume of "Views of the East," full of gorgeous illustrations by an artist of great genius, and accompanied by some letter-press descriptions of the scenes by Higg, who having gone up the Nile with a small carpet-bag, swaggered in print, about his retinue, his luggage, his dragomen, &c., in a style worthy of the 'Arabian Nights'.

"My sister has brought me a beautiful album from London," said Ellen. "Will you write something for me? Langley has written me some beautiful lines beginning—

‘ Go, lovely Rose ! ’ ”

"Indeed," said Frederick, "do you remember how they run?"

Ellen put on a pretty puzzled look, which wrinkled her little white forehead with lines as delicate as the veins of a rose. "Let me think.

"Go, lovely Rose !

Tell her that wastes her time and me—
That now she knows—' "

Lepel laughed. "'Now she knows!' That's very good. What does she know? That the lines are Waller's." Frederick did not care for poetry, (except satirical poetry) but he read it as a matter of culture.

"What, not his own?" asked Ellen.

"Not they. You need not tell him, but ask him carelessly, if he has read Waller."

"For shame. But will you write something? I know you can write."

Frederick laughed. "I am afraid not in the album style, Ellen; but perhaps you would like an epigram, or an essay on politics."

"Anything by you," said Ellen, softly, and dropping her eyes to the book. "Not bad," thought Lepel, who studied his friends, as he would Rachel in Racine.

"I wish I could write poetry," said Frederick, with a very capital sigh.

"People must have great feeling," said Ellen, "to do so."

"People are often unappreciated," said Frederick.

Augusta stopped playing. Frederick looked round.

"I will get a poet for you," said Augusta. "Singleton Fontenoy shall write for you. He's at school now."

"Poor Singleton," said Lepel. "What a very nice fellow he is."

"He is indeed very agreeable. He has a good heart," said Augusta.

The carriage came for Miss Pierrepont. She kissed her friend Augusta, and turned to shake hands with Frederick.

"I mean to do myself the honour of coming over to Pierrepont, to-morrow," he said.

Ellen looked very glad.

"Pray say so to Harry. Good night." And away went the damsel with Augusta.

"Some of the Pierrepont girls have money," said Frederick to his sister, about an hour

later, after a long fit of musing. "One of them had something left her by her grandmother."

"That was Ellen," said Augusta, quietly. "She is too good for you, Frederick." Frederick yawned.

Some weeks after this memorable day, the Huskdale coach from the west arrived at the Crown Inn in that town, about an hour before dusk. Down jumped the guard, and disencumbered his neck of an enormous shawl. The door was opened, and there came out a young gentleman. His cheeks flushed as he stepped into the chill air. He saw his luggage carried in, and walked away towards another inn, the George. Just as he approached, he saw a youth in a scarlet coat dismounting from a horse. He thought he recognised the figure. The rider walked into the inn, as he drew near. The ostler was holding the horse. Though it had been a hunting day, the animal seemed in marvellously good condition.

"Mr. Fontenoy," said the ostler, touching his hat, as the young stranger arrived. Then

looking towards the inn, knowingly, to be sure that the rider did not hear him, he pointed to the horse with a knowing jerk of his thumb and a leer, and said, "now that's what I call bringing in an 'orse in good condition."

Singleton (for it was that youth) laughed, and turned to enter the hostelry. The doors opened with a swing, just as he reached the portal; and who should appear in pink, neat cords, and unexceptionable tops, but—Frederick Lepel!

"Hillo, Singleton, bravo—yoicks!" cried he. "Here's a metamorphosis."

Singleton laughed long and loud.

"Pity me, my friend. The gods have vowed vengeance against me, and changed me into a beast. But come in, and wait till I throw off these rascally habiliments. 'Gad, old boy, I'm afraid it won't be the first time I have turned my coat."

Before long, they were rattling away to Dunreddin.

"Were not you astonished?" said Lepel. "Ah, I have a good deal to explain. But you have a good deal to tell me. I got your

note from Penguin. Come to our place now."

"But, my father ——"

"Pooh! I think he dines with us, to-day. Better meet him there, and before people, than in a *tête-à-tête*. Nothing is so horrible as that."

This seemed sensible enough, so away they went to Dunreddin, where, sure enough, Fontenoy *père* was in the drawing-room.

While Singleton was attiring himself up stairs, Lepel ran down before him, and said, "Papa, I have brought a friend home to dinner. He's up stairs." The party evinced some curiosity.

"Who is he, Fred?" asked his mother.

Mr. Fontenoy looked up, as if he thought it a great liberty. But Fred could do as he pleased—anything in reason, and sometimes a great deal more.

"A very gentlemanly fellow," said Frederick, smiling. "A youth of very good family, clever, and good looking. I'm sure you will think him good looking, Augusta."

"You are joking with us," said Augusta.

The door opened, and in came Singleton. What a surprise !

Singleton was embarrassed, but not ungracefully so. He blushed, and bowed, and smiled, and then walked straight up to his father, and held out his hand, and said, "How are you, Papa?" Mr. Fontenoy shook hands with him, with an air of great coolness. Singleton thought he had heard nothing about the Oaken Lodge affair, but he was mistaken. Dr. Helot had written a particular account of it.

In the course of dinner his father said, "Well, Singleton, where is Mrs. Fontenoy?"

"Sir!" said Singleton, colouring in an instant.

"I thought we were to have a Lalage somebody—no matter."

Singleton was struck dumb. Augusta was astonished. Mr. Fontenoy's object was gained. Confusion, curiosity, and doubt were scattered like seeds into the breasts of the circle. Frederick, indeed—nothing could disturb. But Mr. Fontenoy's son and heir looked as if he had found poison in his champagne.

CHAPTER X.

. . . Now he's ta'en anither shore,
An' ower the sea.

BURNS.

I HAVE designedly left it to the reader to learn by implication that our hero, Singleton, had no mother; for who knows not how much more agreeable is the knowledge which comes gradually, unperceived, and unsought, than that which is formally communicated, or laboriously acquired? I preferred that this fact should be deduced from what was written of his wayward boyhood.

The truth is, that Singleton's mother had been long dead. No one seemed to have known her in the county in which he was

brought up. His father never alluded to her, and Singleton shrank from the subject in consequence. Not that he dreaded anything except recalling to him the painful memory of his loss. But this was sufficient restraint to a delicate nature ; so Singleton had, up to the time of which I am writing, cherished a natural curiosity, but cherished it in secret. He now began to hope that that curiosity would receive its gratification. No one of a thoughtful nature, but must love to know everything of the beings from whom he has sprang. Nay, without affecting ancestral pride, who would not wish to know whether his fair great-great-grandmothers loved music—if their eyes were blue, or if they flirted ?—without encouraging prejudices, who would not be proud to think that his great-great-grandfather was one who read Shakspeare, and perhaps dined with Fielding ? Now-a-days, when so many people are prejudiced against prejudices, let us at least respect even prejudices that are associated with sentiment or poetry. Perhaps, it will be found that a gentleman who is

Too proud to care from whence he came,

will be apt to be too proud to care where he goes !

At all events, Singleton began to grow very curious about his family. He took pleasure in wandering in a gallery where there was a goodly row of De Fontenoy's: for I must state, by-the-bye, that De Fontenoy was originally the family name, and so remained till the time of the French revolution, when Roger De Fontenoy, who was a strong whig, and a friend of Fox's—who affected an elegant sans-culottism—thought Paine a patriot—and owed money to Brookes—dropped the “De” as a barbarous relic. It was not without hesitation that Singleton's father, a strong tory, suffered Roger to remain in the gallery, but he dared not dispense with the genealogical link, so contented himself with remarking that that gentleman had obviously been of unsound mind.

Singleton early observed that he himself bore little family likeness to these distinguished gentlemen; and this made him more and more curious about his maternal ancestry. A gush of tenderness followed his indulgence of a vein of sentiment; and he came down one morning,

determined to speak to his father on the subject. His father was already out. Singleton was perhaps somewhat relieved, as well as disappointed, for he dreaded the interview a little. In fact, he expected from him little sympathy with sentiment, for Mr. Fontenoy rarely showed that he was subject to any strong emotion but anger.

Finding that he was left alone in the mansion, Singleton went to wander in the gallery. There, as he was once again gazing at the oval faces and brown eyes of the Fontenoy—characteristics of their Norman origin—he heard a step behind him. Turning round, he saw Mrs. Campbell, the housekeeper, a tall, stately, ladylike personage of mature years, whose face was one of the earliest which he remembered. She had been in the establishment ever since his infancy, and sometimes, during Mr. Fontenoy's excursions to London or the continent, had been a kind of foster-mother to Singleton.

“Good morning, Master Singleton,” she said, smiling benignantly, to our hero. “Your papa is going to attend sessions, sir. The

trouble he has to go through, poor gentleman, is something awful."

Singleton smiled, and continuing to gaze at Lionel Fontenoy, a cavalier, said "Ah! these were the men, Mrs. Campbell!"

"Yes, indeed, and well may you say it. If they had all been as brave as him, we would not have had a red-nosed rebel ruling the country," said Mrs. Campbell, who had a great contempt for the memory of Oliver Cromwell.

And here I take the liberty to observe that the poor lady was not more ignorant than many people in very different positions in life, of the real character and history of that great man.

Singleton looked round him, and sighed. The housekeeper had thought, lately, that he was looking melancholy, and like others, she could not understand how a person could be melancholy who had fine clothes and lived well.

"I am sorry to see you gloomy, Master Singleton," she said, kindly.

Singleton assumed a smile, and then it

occurred to him that he would sound Mrs. Campbell on the matter which was nearest his thoughts, and of which she must, he fancied, have some knowledge. So he put on a gay air, and pointing again to the portraits, said, "Now, *I'm* not much like any of these goodly gentlemen, eh, Mrs. Campbell?"

She did not perceive his drift, so she said at once, "Why, I don't think the likeness is that way, sir."

"Do you remember my mother?" said Singleton, looking her straight in the face, and striving to conceal his embarrassment.

Mrs. Campbell paused, coughed, and answered slowly, "I have seen her, sir;" and then, as if she had suddenly remembered something, she said, "but I must go to ——."

"Stop!" said Singleton, seizing her by the wrist, by a sudden impulse, and growing very hot.

"La, how you frighten me!" cried the housekeeper.

"Mrs. Campbell," cried Singleton, with an affectionate look; "you have known me long, and you have been kind to me when I was

very young. I want to know all about my mother. My father is away; I don't care to speak to him about it, but tell me all you know. Where was it?—what was she like?"

And Singleton kissed her hand affectionately, and so warmly, that I dare say it made her feel young again; she actually blushed as coquettishly as the great Elizabeth at sixty.

"I'll show you something, if you will promise not to tell your father nor anybody," said she, lowering her voice.

"Oh, I swear ——"

"Never mind swearing. I never believe that men are in earnest if they swear!"

Here, she dived into the recesses of her imposing black silk gown, for a large bunch of keys.

"Promise faithfully you will never tell. Your father would never forgive me, Master Singleton."

"I do promise, most faithfully."

"Then follow me."

She left the gallery followed by Singleton,

who was all eagerness and anticipation. On they went, from room to room, through long passages and up mysterious stairs, for Heatherby was a very spacious old place, and had been built and patched in every variety of style. They had no adventure, unless we may so name the encountering one of Mrs. Campbell's maidens, a young female with pretty face and feet, who, without the smallest reason, made a point of blushing and looking confused whenever she met Singleton. Which was a great shame!

At last, they reached a small room at the very top of the house. Mrs. Campbell entered and Singleton after her. It was quite dark. While Singleton stood bewildered, the housekeeper removed a shutter. In rushed the light like a triumphant conqueror. It peopled the room with little motes wavering in the sunbeams. And full in Singleton's eyes there appeared a portrait.

Ah! that face—so beautiful and so young—with heavenly eyes of heaven's own colour—with soft masses of dark hair, and a mouth that seemed redolent of roses, tinged too, in

spite of its fairness and its youth, with a melancholy as delicate as the shade of a young cypress—that face, was the face of Singleton's mother!

“Who was that, sir?” asked Mrs. Campbell.

Singleton's eyes filled with tears. “I know her,—I know her,” he cried. “Sweet mother, pray for me!” And he gazed upon the face with rapture.

“Oh, for shame!” cried Mrs. Campbell, shocked at what she sincerely believed to be an impiety; for it is extraordinary with what pains our “reforming” churchmen have rooted out all the natural feelings that create and beautify devotion.

Singleton turned his moist eyes to her. “Do tell me all you know, Mrs. Campbell. I will remember the kindness, indeed I will!”

Mrs. Campbell was touched, but she was frightened. “Indeed, dear Master Singleton, I know very little. Your mamma died very young, not long after you was born. Your papa keeps every thing silent about her. There was something wrong, I believe.”

“What !” cried Singleton, turning pale as death.

“Oh, dear, I don’t mean that, sir,” cried the housekeeper. “God forbid. I mean the match was some way ’jectionable.” Here she appeared very much frightened, and perhaps secretly regretted that she had ever brought him to this chamber.

He stood motionless for a little. A calm feeling of reverence succeeded his emotion, and then seeing that it was impossible, and doubting whether it was just, to draw anything more from her on the subject, he thanked her, kissed his hand with a chivalrous religion to the picture, and fled to his bed-room. Mrs. Campbell, meanwhile, shut up the window again, locked the room carefully, and then departed to her own apartment, where she recruited her nerves after this trial, with a large wine-glass of Madeira.

Singleton had been shut up by himself for some time, and had just bathed his face and refreshed himself with some perfumes, when he received a message, saying, that his father wanted to speak to him. With some trepi-

dation he descended. His father was not alone; there was with him a tall, fine old gentleman, with a fair face very bold in its expression. He was seated on a chair opposite Mr. Fontenoy, and leaning forward to speak to him on a large heavy cane with a gold head.

"This is my boy," said his father.

"Ah, my lad, how are you?" said the stranger, jumping up to shake hands, and dropping down again very suddenly. "Do you know who I am, eh?"

"No, sir," said Singleton.

"Why, your grand-uncle to be sure, Sir John Singleton, K.B., Admiral of the White! Did you never hear of your grandmother, Miss Singleton? By G——, you ought to have, for she brought some rhino into the family." And here the veteran made a lunge with the portentous cane at Singleton, who burst out laughing. Mr. Fontenoy looked very serious, but was obviously rather frightened of his naval relation.

"He's a fine lad. Come here, my boy, and lay your arm on the table!" Singleton obeyed.

The Admiral raised his arm on the elbow, joined his fingers with Singleton's, and made him struggle who should press the other's arm down. Singleton was defeated, but made a good resistance.

"Ah, a wiry young rascal. Well, what do you know? Know Latin and Greek, eh?"

"Yes," answered Singleton."

"Well, you know a d----d deal more than I do, that's all then," said Sir John, with a roar. "But don't you learn to swear. I can't help it sometimes, but it's infernally wrong, and I was brought up in a cursed service."

"You were going to suggest something to my son?" said Mr. Fontenoy, quietly.

"Going to suggest? I was going to ask him, whether he wouldn't like to go to sea? They say that there's going to be a war soon. And I think so, for by Jupiter Jovis, the French won't rest till they get cursed well licked.

"Thundering and roaring—

Thundering and roaring—

Thundering and roaring—

Guns!"

“Well, Singleton, what do you say?” asked Mr. Fontenoy. “You complain of want of action, and you won’t hunt, and you won’t shoot or fish. Will you go to sea?”

“Action!” cried the Admiral misunderstanding the youth’s meaning,—but scarcely more than his father did, by-the-bye, “You’ll get actions enough, if there’s a war, and I tell you there’s one brewing in the Mediterranean at this moment.”

“Well, I’ll think of it till the morning,” said my hero, somewhat taken by surprise.

“Ah, that’s sensible,” said the admiral, “and now Fontenoy, let us have dinner.”

At dinner, the Admiral performed in a manner worthy of his reputation, for he was a dashing and gallant officer. After dinner, he filled up his glass, and saying solemnly “The Queen!” pronounced the claret worthy of the toast.

“Now, you would not think I had a wooden leg would you, my boy, from my walk?” he asked Singleton.

“Certainly not,” said Singleton, with surprise. Sir John jumped up from his chair,

and began walking about the room in a most imposing manner. "Yet it's a jury leg: cork, my boy! And by—whew," he cried, whistling away the rising oath, "I have drawn enough corks in my life to keep me in legs, till I want them no longer!" And down he sat again.

Mr. Fontenoy began two or three subjects—corn, country-gentlemen, and the poor rates, but Sir John did not appear to have a relish for any of them. "How do you think I lost my leg? I was midshipman of the 'Magnifico.' We fell foul of the French ship, 'Harpagon,' got to windward of her, shot away her fore-topmast. Well, just as I was going on a message from our Captain, to the fellow who commanded the main-deck quarters,—bang came a thirty-two pounder, and takes off my leg! It was left hanging just by a bit of gristle, and as they carried me below, the leg went bump, bump," (the Admiral took a sip of claret at each exclamation) "at every step of the hatchway ladder!"

Singleton's genuine shudder was taken by the *raconteur* as a high compliment.

"That was a wound, eh? They gave me some brandy, and dressed the stump. I got a pension, and I got a cork leg. And here I am you see, as sound as ever, and I shall fly my red bunting at the main before I die."

"Shall you go to sea again, uncle?" asked Singleton.

"I don't know, my boy," said the old man, rather moodily. "But I hear that old Pannikin, a Captain of 1818, is to commission the 'Patagonian,' 80, soon, for the Mediterranean; and he shall apply for you, if you like.—But help yourself to wine, my boy. 'Gad you won't always get claret, or else the service is cursedly altered. By-the-bye, I invented a bottle once."

"Invented a bottle!" said Mr. Fontenoy.

"Yes; I was with a very dull set of fellows who would not pass the wine, and I invented a bottle *with a round bottom* that would not stand! So, you see, they were forced to keep it moving."

"Till they could not stand themselves, eh, uncle?" said Singleton, facetiously.

"Ha! ha! yes, just so," said the Admiral.

“Singleton, ring for coffee,” said Mr. Fontenoy, gravely. And so, with anecdotes, and Sir John’s good nature and droll characteristics, the evening passed off pleasantly enough ; and it was not till after accompanying his uncle to his chamber, and then retiring to his own, that our hero began again to think of the tender and touching topics of the morning. How his mother’s sweet face haunted him ! The thought became a vision, and he saw her in his dreams. Then, he fancied, she came close to him, and kissed his brow, and said—“Follow your destiny, son, and you shall hear of me in the South !” Singleton awoke suddenly. He could have sworn he heard a voice. But all was still, and he fell asleep again.

In the morning, he rose early. He went to Mrs. Campbell and begged her to let him see the portrait once more, before his father rose. With reluctance, she took him again to the room, and this time he noticed, what he had not observed before, that from his mother’s neck there hung a cross. It might be a mere ornament ; it might be a sacred symbol. And

where did that symbol gain its divinity? In the South.

“Why should I not go to sea?” said Singleton, in soliloquy. “The sea has been thought to be the great fountain of being, the *fons omnium viventium*, the mother of all life! From the sublime speculations of Thales, to the magnificent hymn of Byron, it has been the object of the wonder of the sage, and the admiration of the poet! From the sea rose Venus—in the sea perished Sappho! It has been described by Æschylus, and it was the birth place of Undine! It received the life-blood of Nelson, and the last sigh of Shelley! Everything great and wonderful and beautiful is associated with its name. Cæsar struggled with its currents, and saved from its waters the proudest trophy of his genius. Cicero flew to it for refuge, a few hours before he met his fate from the assassins. It was the bride of Venice, and the nurse of England.—Enough, I will go!”——

“I will go, uncle,” he said, at breakfast.

“So you shall, my sucking Nelson,” replied his uncle. Your appointment shall be here in

a fortnight; for Pannikin will hoist his pendant soon, and he has a right to enter one youngster. And he's under great obligations to me. I like decision—so gallop over to Huskdale, and tell your tailor to give you your measures on a slip of paper. I will take them to London with me, and hand them over to a crack outfitter. When you come up to town call upon me in Bolton Street, and I'll give you a feed."

"I'm exceedingly obliged and grateful."

"Well, prove your gratitude by ringing the bell for me." And in a short time afterwards the distinguished old officer was on his road to London, and my hero's fingers were tingling with the vigour of his parting shake.

Sir John Singleton was an officer of the old school, and the proper old school. He was not one of those vulgar persons who crept into the service during the war, and who, with none but the qualities that are equally found in the common sailors, prided themselves upon their contempt for refinement, and thought that they were Benbows, because

they were barbarians. Not one of those spitting and swearing gentry, who turned the lower decks of their ships into brothels, and the upper into flogging shambles; who, with vulgar manners and plebeian blood in their veins, esteemed it fine to persecute officers descended from the Normans, and whose manners would have graced a Court. Sir John had all their daring, but had qualities, also, worthy of his ancient and honourable family; he was brave, but he was courteous and courtly. To be sure, great culture was inconsistent with his career, and a slight roughness betrayed that he had been accustomed to rough work. But he was a gentleman, and a man of honour. He had an energy that shrank from nothing; he might have been a valuable adjutant to Blake, and it was not his fault that he did not die with Nelson,—for no man fought more bravely at Trafalgar, and he had lost his leg in battle some years before that bloody fight. So let us wish him a pleasant journey to town.

We are now to consider Singleton as preparing to leave home,—a remarkable

period divided between sentiment and common-place,—portmanteaus and plighted troth,—tin cases and tears,—a time when we shrink from going, and would not stay for the world. Often, he resolved to speak to his father on the mysterious question which haunted him, but his courage always failed at the point, and whenever he screwed it up to the mark, something spoiled the opportunity. Then, he was engaged in attending to innumerable invitations from friends desirous to pay him attention before his departure. Ellen Pierrepont was anxious to see him with the little dagger on which forms part of a “youngster’s” uniform. Augusta was weaving into some white cambric handkerchiefs the Fontenoy crest, in red silk, for his special use ; he being “barbarous” enough, though he lived in an “enlightened” manufacturing county, to feel some interest in the heraldic emblems of his family ! Tomkins despises these things, and ridicules a “cross fichée.” Does Tomkins know that the *fichée* means that the Crusader had his cross sharpened at one end, that he might fix it in the

earth, and kneel before it to pray to God 'ere he went to sleep? Let the poor fellow try and picture *that*!

In a week or two there arrived, as the Admiral had said there would, a big letter addressed to Mr. Singleton Charles Fontenoy, which we subjoin:—

“SIR,

“I am commanded by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to inform you that you have been appointed as Volunteer of the First Class to H. M. S. “Patagonian,” fitting out at Sheerness, and you are hereby commanded to report yourself on board the guard ship at that port to be examined.

“Your obedient servant,

“ALFRED DE SLUGGY.”

Upon the receipt of this document (the signing of which was the only work that the aristocratic De Sluggie had done that week for his money), Singleton was rather frightened. The phrase “examined” suggested all the terrors of Mr. Trochee over again, and

he actually went to the library and read hard for a whole afternoon. He then thought that, as he was going into the Navy, he would look up some Naval novels, and he sent over accordingly to the Circulating Library at Huskdale for an unlimited supply.

Back they came,—“Cheeks, the Marine,” in three vols.; “Roger McGuffin, the Boat-swain;” “A Story of the Sea;” &c., &c. Singleton, whose reading, as far as modern fiction went, had lain in a different school, (for he was a Bulwer and D’Israeli man,) was somewhat startled by these productions, and began to think that if they were pictures of naval life, he would have some extraordinary persons to associate with. But it was too late; though different, indeed, was the style of these books from thy ærial and gorgeous colouring, oh, thou who didst dream “Zanoni,”—or thy fanciful creations—father of “Contarini Fleming”—thou, who amongst satirists, art God of the Silver Bow!

Singleton resolved that he would have separate interviews with those whom he loved. Thus, parting is made more tender, but less

embarrassing and sad ; and he resolved to defer to the last an interview with his father.

He went, one morning near the fatal day, to Dunreddin ; Augusta was by herself in the boudoir, Singleton opened the door softly, and went in. There she was, as usual, reading poetry, and looking poetry.

“ Good morning, Augusta.”

Augusta looked up and smiled, and motioned to him to sit down. They might almost have been called brother and sister, so like were they in nature,—in enthusiasm, in fancy, in goodness and gentleness—in what is called “ organization,” but which yet we feel must be higher than organization, though we cannot define it. Now, how different was Singleton from his father, and Augusta from her brother Frederick ! These are mysteries of nature not sufficiently considered.

“ I go soon, Augusta,” said Singleton, softly. “ And I must bid my sister good-bye.”

“ You are not going now,” said Augusta, suddenly.

“ Not this minute,” said Singleton, smiling. “ But I wish to have a little farewell chat. I

will write to you from the Mediterranean, and tell you how I like the 'warm south.'"

"Think of me, when you are in Athens," said Augusta, smiling. "I need not tell you who else to think of."

Singleton turned pale. "Ah, poor Lalage. I wish she had a sister. Who ever had a sister such as you have been to me? You have been the lamp my soul has seen by!"

He rose, and went to look out of the window. The spring was coming. But there was a shade on Augusta's brow, and she sighed.

"I must have a long talk with Fred, before I go," said Singleton.

"Ah, do you know, I fear Fred, Singleton. I am convinced that his ambition is quite unscrupulous. I am quite afraid he will bring us into some danger, if it is at all necessary to his plans."

"Oh, he is certainly bold and indifferent, but he has a good heart, I think."

Augusta looked melancholy, and shook her head. They sat down, and had a long conversation, and then Singleton went next to her brother Frederick's rooms. He found that great

patriot (whose democracy, by the way, was now assuming the milder form and title of "Philosophical Radicalism"), but whose proceedings were variable and somewhat inconsistent just at present,—employed with his meerscham, with his back to the fire. He was gazing, philosophically, upon a table strewn with books and papers, and had quite the air of an embryo minister.

"Ah, Sing," he cried. "I'm glad to see you. Time of departure drawing near? This is very terrific!"

"We must try and bear up," said Singleton, laughing.

"Just so. Put on a weed."

"Thank you. I don't care about smoking, just now."

"Going to sea, my boy," pursued Lepel. "Now, do you know, Singleton, I am not suspicious, (Singleton saw that some monstrous suspicion was forthcoming,) but I think I see your father's drift in wishing you off. It's my opinion—I may be wrong,—(which meant, I feel sure I am right,)—but it's my opinion—thinks of marrying again!"

Singleton gave a genuine start, and was indeed very seriously astonished. Lepel glanced at him, and puffed vigorously at the meerschaum.

“He is quite young enough—particularly with the Heatherby property in his possession, (here Lepel sneered,) for most young ladies of this day. (For myself, I prefer women of a certain age—Balzac brought them into fashion in Paris.) However, I think you will find that he’ll marry, and it remains for you to consider how far your interests will be affected by it.”

Singleton continued to listen with great curiosity, and was still too much surprised to speak.

“My dear boy,” resumed the speaker paternally, “you have no talents for worldly matters. For *practical* purposes, the most useless of all vehicles is a balloon! although it soars so high!—Of course, I know your intellectual powers, (Singleton blushed!) but they are not of a practical character, and if you do not take care, it will be your lot in life to be duped by men with not half your talents. Such is often the case with literary men.”—

Here, I pause to remark the curious fact, that neither Lepel nor Singleton thought that this observation was applicable to their own case, and present conversation.—

“Now, I don’t think you and your father have much in common.”—

It suddenly flashed upon Singleton to speak to Lepel about his mother. But he checked himself, and resolved not to do so. Yet, the subject hovered in his mind, and influenced him through the rest of the interview.

“He does not understand you; and you best know whether perfect confidence has subsisted between you.”—(This remark sank deep into Singleton’s mind.)—“However, my boy, put your interests in my hands, while you are away. Let *me* look out for you.”

“Who could my father have in view to marry, think you?” asked Singleton, passing over, *pro. tem.* the last words.

“Nay—that’s hard to say. What would you think of—Augusta?”

Singleton was thunder-struck.

“Not that it’s at all likely, that, my boy,” pursued his friend, coolly; “for she is to

marry the eldest Belden, heir to the Clangour Earl."

"How so?" asked Singleton, quite overwhelmed, and driven backwards and forwards by every new stroke of Frederick's.

"I see it on the cards," continued Lepel. "I have seen that he really likes her—and that's everything, let me tell you, after all. I see him married to her, and the influence of that family secured for me. It is no such great honour, although great luck,—for my family have been gentlemen for seven hundred years, and how many of the families in the Peerage can say that! I see myself in public life, backed by the prejudices of others, and courage of my own,—governing fools, and outmanœuvring rogues,—the successful schemer under an old system, and perhaps the hero of a new one." His eyes flashed fire as he spoke, and he stretched out his hand, as though he would grasp the future that he saw before him in a grip of iron.

Singleton felt his blood grow warm, and then he turned to Lepel, and spoke tranquilly.

"Well!—I wish you, as Johnson said to

Burke, all the success that an honest man can." (Lepel laughed; he was as cool again as ever.) "I go to the land of dreams—quieter dreams than these. Speak again about what you were saying of my father."

Lepel did speak, and the dialogue lasted a long time, and when it concluded, it was with an implied understanding that Lepel should act for Singleton, during his absence, according to his discretion.

Then Frederick totally changed the subject, and pointed out to him several volumes of orations that lay upon the table. "There are two arts," he said, "more than any others, necessary to the youth of our age."

"And what are they?"

"Oratory, and the use of arms! Let us go down to dinner, and drink the healths of Cicero, Angelo, and Mr. Nock!"

Frederick was exceedingly lively all dinner time, and you never would have imagined for an instant that he was all the time mentally occupied in speculating on post-obits as a means of raising money to pay bills.

Time passed on. There was a grand ball

at Heatherby to celebrate Singleton's appointment. Next morning he was to depart. He had resolved to speak to his father on the great subject that very morning ; but, strange to say, Mr. Fontenoy had gone "unavoidably" out, but had left a most affectionate note to his son, containing the final good-bye. Was it indifference or tenderness, thought Singleton, that had prompted this !

He knew not. It was enveloped in the mystery which surrounded so much for him. Once he thought of delaying his departure at all risks, awaiting his father's return, and pressing the inquiry ; but, for this, he had not courage. Speaking to Frederick on the subject was profanation ; and as for speaking to others, he was prevented by a petty species of fear, which sometimes haunts all of us,—the fear of being thought "sentimental."

He was accompanied to Huskdale, to the coach, by Frederick and various youths of the county of their acquaintance. A start,—and he was off ! Of the thousands who have felt the sensations of such a moment was there ever one who could describe them ? Here we

see the divinity of the soul as much as in anything,—that it declines interpretation and analysis,—that it is a King who will accept no words as its slaves. Here, as in every inquiry, we find ourselves stopped by mystery,—mystery, whereof the recognition and contemplation is as beneficial to the mind as darkness is relieving to the eye. “Let us be silent that we may hear the whisper of the gods.”*

When the coach reached its first halting-place, the guard came to the window.

“Which of you gentlemen is Mr. Fontenoy?”

“I am,” replied Singleton.

“I was told to give you this when we came here, sir.”

It was a kind of little note, and in the hand-writing of the housekeeper, Mrs. Campbell. It contained but one line:—

“They used to live at St. Albans.”

* Emerson.

CHAPTER XI.

Ah pity ! The lily is withered, the purple of the violet turned into paleness.

JEREMY TAYLOR. *Contemplations on the State of Man.*

The dead how sacred ! Sacred is the dust
Of this heaven-laboured form, erect, divine !

YOUNG. *Night-Thoughts.*

RAISED on a slight eminence among the fair and fertile plains of Hertfordshire, the town of St. Albans has a site worthy of its associations Roman genius and Saxon Christianity have left their witnesses there. The idealist who has visited the most touching cities in the world may find a fresh pleasure of the soul in that little town. And what variety ! The mind moves over ages at a stride.

From memories of Tacitus to memories of Cromwell. Here died St. Alban: there sleeps Bacon. Do you want a more modern—nay, a comic association? Here Hogarth met poor wayward old Lord Lovat (that two-penny Highland Marius,) as he was on his way to London, to lay his gray head on the block.

And then the Abbey! Vast, grand, and simple, it looks rather as if it had been hewn out of rock, than built. An air of very sublime and severe simplicity attends it. It breathes, as it were, the cold air of the North; and suggests that it was the work of men, who learning to bow to Jesus, could not entirely forget Odin and Thor. Its characteristic is a sublime utility, more than beauty or splendour. You would pronounce it a structure created from a deep feeling of the necessity of religion—the child of the people's devotion, more than the priest's pride. Utilitarianism was divine then, and this was the form it took. Upon the whole, I hold the building of this Abbey rather a strange freak for a "barbarous" people in a "dark" age, and

difficult to account for, when we consider that there was no member for the borough,—town council,—or county paper,—in existence! The St. Albans people have become civilised now, and turn their “vote and influence” to a more “practical” account! Oh, that horrible word!

It was a fine morning in Spring, and the grey towers of the Abbey looked bright in the sun, and greener seemed the grass in the churchyard of St. X——. In that spacious resting-place there was a man digging a new grave. He was a tall, melancholy, middle-aged man of sour aspect. He had his coat off, that he might work more freely. His arms were red with the exercise, and every now and then large drops of perspiration fell from him and mixed with the heaps of earth; for he was working very hard—you might almost say “with a will,” in the cause of the coming tenant; in a word, you would have taken him for a legatee! But in truth, he was only the parish sexton, and worked professionally. He had dug the graves of several of his own kin with that same spade—a task which sounds

terrible enough, but which to him as a sexton, seemed no more so, than murder to an Austrian general, who has put down a free people!

Whether it be that grave-digging is not so much of a sinecure as of old, I know not; but I have remarked that grave-diggers do not sing now at their toil. Our friend was quite silent excepting a grunt occasionally, and stuck constantly to his work; when he heard a step near, and looking up saw a young gentleman approaching the grave, whose light step, sunny face, and bright eye, contrasted very strikingly with the place. The youth, though not in mourning, was dressed in very dark clothes: so possibly the sexton thought he might have some business in his way. He looked up, and touching his hat, said, "a fine morning, sir!"

"Very fine, indeed," said the youth, quietly.

"It's a little chilly, sir, but my work keeps me warm."

"A very large burial-ground this is," the youth continued, looking round.

"Yes, sir. This ain't the best part of it,

here where we are. It's best on the north side. There's some fine dry lying ground there, sir!"

"Some fine monuments I see, too," and the youth moved on, in the direction of which the man spoke.

There is a beautiful and affecting story told of poor Chatterton. Not long before the close of his melancholy career he was wandering in this way in the churchyard of St. Pancras, in a sublime reverie of poetry, when he stumbled, and fell into a new-made grave! His companion, as he assisted him to get out, congratulated him playfully on "the resurrection of genius." The poet smiled mournfully and shook his head, but from what he said, it was clear that he thought the accident prophetic. And not long afterwards he drank of the fatal cup, and added one more name to the list of martyrs.

This story hovered in the memory of Fontenoy as he strolled away from the new-made grave. He had come to St. Albans in consequence of the note which I mentioned in the last chapter. He had but one day to spare

before proceeding to Sheerness and had devoted it to this visit. And now what could he learn when he was here. The case seemed hopeless. Yet it was something to see the sunlight streaming on the Abbey windows, and to know that Romans had once been on that same ground; and that perhaps on that very spot some joyous young Tribunus had quoted Horace to his comrade, and dipped into the Falernican or Massican, long, long ago.

He was musing thus very absently, scarcely seeing the gravestones before him, and almost stumbling every now and then in the long grass, when suddenly his own name flashed upon his eyes! He started, like one awakened from sleep, and with keen attention, and a heart beginning to beat, he stood at the foot of the grave and read the words Ivy Fontenoy. Why did he start so? He might have known that his mother was likely to have been buried here—but this sudden discovery!—It seemed as if he had just lost her by death—now when he had first known her resting-place.

He was very sad and lonely there, among this crowd of graves—this mob of monu-

ments. There is something sadder than death in a country church-yard. It is not only that the form you loved is lying there,—and that the ugly heap of earth which it displaced, is basking in the sun, instead of the form which added to that sun's glory. But then, how wretched were the lives of the poor drudges to whom the churchyard is a kind of second union! And oh, their memorials! Sorrow becomes complicated with a degradation which seems to discolour its tears.

Singleton stood there in silence. Why is it that all emotion has come to be classed as “theatrical?” Is it, that in our age, deep feeling is only seen on the stage, and that we look for nothing elevated or touching except in the mimic life?

But a new surprise came to him—a soft and beautiful surprise. Neglect as cold as the bones of the dead or the hearts of the survivors, had left the other graves bare. But on *her* grave, there was a bunch of fresh violets—the first of the spring!

Whose pious hand had offered these fair gifts? Some one, doubtless, who had known

and loved her, lived near—and to Singleton, as he turned away full of this thought—the sunlight on the town seemed brighter, and the fields round more fair.

He moved away with a lighter heart. The grave-digger had gone. The wind was rising from the Northward, and a slow solemn cloud sailing towards the South, seemed to beckon Fontenoy to follow to the Sea.

Book II.

THE SEEKER.

To the Ocean now I fly.

COMUS.

CHAPTER I.

“There was a ship,” quoth he.

THE ANCIENT MARINER.

Men are placed in command of ships still, who were educated under the old system * * * and find themselves as much out of their element as Rip Van Winkle, in Washington Irving’s charming story, when he descended from the mountain with his long beard.

A CLARET CUP, p. 91.

H. M. S. “Patagonian” was built as a three-decker, at a cost of £120,000,—when it was discovered that she could not sail. She was then cut down into a frigate at a cost of £50,000, when it was found out that she would not tack. She was next built up into a two-decker at the cost of another £50,000,—and

then it was discovered that she could be made useful—so the Admiralty kept her unemployed for ten years !

The “Patagonian,” like some Lords of the Admiralty, was noways remarkable for her head. But she had a wonderful round stern. She was rather sluggish in working, and altogether was among ships a kind of naval hippopotamus. You might get five knots out of her, on a bow line, in a very stiff breeze, and I believe, she once went nine-and-a-half, with a gale of wind on the quarter. In a heavy seaway she rolls steadily, like an old boatswain who has had a glass too much. She has tolerable accommodations inside, and upon the whole, is more ridiculous than positively objectionable.

When it had been decided to commission the “Patagonian” after she had lain for the above-mentioned ten years in the Medway, the next question was—who should be the happy man to command her? A Kent borough became vacant; there was an election; one Pannikin, a captain on half pay who had voted for twenty years with the pinks, suddenly voted

with the blues. Two of his tradesmen did the same, and the fortune of the day was turned. Now, what was the exact degree of moral guilt incurred by Pannikin, by this apostacy? Let us be charitable. It could not be much,—for as the veteran was incapable of forming an opinion on politics at all, it was scarcely a sacrifice of principle in the proper sense of the words. Be that as it may, it was a sensible move. Not long afterwards, Captain Pannikin was appointed to the command of the “Patagonian.”

Pannikin was one of those who “came in through the hawseholes,” as the old naval phrase says,—that is, he entered the service as a common seaman. He began his career as a boy, and in that capacity was appointed servant to a Lieutenant, who was a man of very great family by his father’s side,—for history, which delights to puzzle the investigator, is quite silent on the subject of his maternal origin. This Lieutenant was not without those tastes (to which he may be said to have owed his existence) which distinguished his illustrious father, and his boy Pannikin, I believe,

with that intuitive sagacity which is a great deal more profitable in a worldly point of view to a young man than any amount of literary genius, knew how to serve his master without neglecting himself. But, *quid multa?* He secured his master's patronage, and when the ship was paid off, was appointed to another, as midshipman. He had a good deal of stolid, physical pluck, and in the days of hot war this was of great service to him. Trafalgar found him a junior Mate, and left him an acting Lieutenant, for the ship which he was in, having a fool for a commander, exposed herself, about one o'clock in the afternoon, to be "raked" by the whole broadside of the "Santissima Trinidad."

On this one occasion, prudence was of more service to Pannikin than pluck. When a ship is in danger of being raked, it is customary to make the men lie down at their quarters, but etiquette requires the officers to remain standing. Now, I suppose Pannikin was afraid that if so brave a man as himself continued to stand his men would be ashamed to lie down; so, no sooner was it seen from the bow-ports

of the lower deck that the huge form of the Spanish three-decker was crossing them at right-angles, within a hundred yards, than Mr. Pannikin, who belonged to the foremost lower-deck quarters, gave the word to lie down,—and set the example!

The broadside came; there was a thunder and a crash. Deadly had that shower been; several officers were killed by it. “He who humbleth himself shall be exalted” was verified in Pannikin’s case; he rose up; the shot had cleared the way for his promotion, and he was promoted accordingly. It was on this occasion that Sir John Singleton secured his first claim to Pannikin’s gratitude. Sir John commanded the after lower-deck quarters of the same ship. A word from him would have fatally damaged the rising man, but Sir John was considerate as well as brave, and maintained a compassionate silence. Indeed, a bloody battle was just the thing to put that brave man into a good-humour, and he stamped about the lower-deck on the cork-leg which (as I have said) he even then wore, as merrily as possible.

After Trafalgar, Pannikin served under my favourite, the brave, good, gentle, and accomplished Collingwood, that Bayard of the sea, whose graceful letters would have done honour to a man who had never done anything in his life, but write. He was made a captain in 1818, and from that time to the year in which the "Patagonian" was commissioned, this gallant officer never saw the sea. With his prize-money and half-pay, he established himself in a farm in Kent, where he cultivated his laurels, and what he could better appreciate, his cabbages. He became a regular farmer; he married the daughter of one, and had a family, numerous and promising, almost, as that of Priam; indeed, so countryfied had he become, that the big official letter, containing the appointment which rewarded his apostacy in the Potborough election, found him in top-boots, beating up a hedge for a hare, with a second-hand single-barrelled Manton and a brown spaniel.

It was a fine spring morning, about three weeks after he had hoisted his pendant, and Captain Pannikin was with his family steaming

down the Medway to Sheerness. The Captain stood near the man at the wheel, with a nautical air; his wife was near him, and Miss Jemima, a fine, chubby young lady, of the Dutch Tulip style, with a parasol as big as a dandy's umbrella, was gazing on her papa with admiration: The gallant officer, though in plain clothes, looked very imposing.

Presently, a heavy coal barge was seen sailing up ahead of them, with a strong breeze. It had a huge black sail spread, and so may be said to have been *nigro simillima cygno*, as the Latin grammar has it. As it swayed to and fro, there seemed a chance of a collision with the steamer.

"Starboard, damme, starboard," cried Pan-
nikin, to the man at the wheel: The passengers looked at him with astonishment.

"You ain't allowed to talk to the man at the wheel, sir," cried the skipper, from the paddle-box.

"I'm a captain in the navy, sir," cried Pan-
nikin.

"That's nuffing to us. Port, Bill." Just then the coal barge yawed. The steamer

grazed her. There was a volley of damns from her. The passengers shouted, and Miss Jemima started with the shock, and flung herself forward into the arms of a young gentleman in a blue monkey jacket and a glazed cap, who came rushing up from the cabin to see what was the matter.

"You cursed lubbers," roared Pannikin to the crew of the steamer, "you ought to be well flogged."

"Never mind him, Bill," said the imperturbable skipper; "steady." So saying, the skipper shook his fist at the man in the coal-barge, who returned him a graceful salute of a satirical character, with his fingers and nose.

"Too bad,—too bad," muttered Pannikin, angrily. "Jemima, come here!" For Jemima had flung herself on a seat, and the young gentleman was holding her parasol with a sympathetic look.

"Come here, Jemima; the lubbers have not sunk her yet; but it's not their fault."

"Thank you, sir," said Jemima, softly and gratefully to the young gentleman; "I must go to my pa, Captain Pannikin."

“Oh, indeed! Captain Pannikin is your father, is he? I am going to join his ship.” So saying, the youth in the monkey jacket walked up to the Captain, bowed, and said: “Captain Pannikin; I must introduce myself to you, sir. My name is Fontenoy, and I am just going down to join the ‘Patagonian.’”

Here was a chance for the Captain’s dignity to assert itself, for it had been somewhat wounded, he was afraid, in the eyes of the passengers, by the skipper’s cool impudence. He gave a little kind of grunt, and said:—

“You’re my youngster, eh? Hem! Touch your cap to your superior officer!”

This is a change from the country gentlemen of Rockshire, thought our hero, but he did as he was bid. Mrs. Pannikin looked round at the passengers to see if a proper feeling was inspired among them by this. It is astonishing how the heroes of the old school love to domineer, when they are afloat, over gentlemen who would not be seen speaking to them in Pall Mall!

“And how is Sir John Singleton?” en-

quired Mrs. Pannikin, loudly, and with an appearance of great interest.

“He is quite well, I thank you ; we were at the Opera last night. Are you fond of music, Miss Pannikin ?”

Here Singleton turned round and bowed to Jemima, who, however, began to think that it was time to participate in the parental superiority, and answered with a dignity that was somewhat forbidding. Singleton, rather surprised at all this, waited a few minutes longer with the group, and then bowed again, and walked away to the fore-part of the vessel ; here he meditated on his new position, and mentally compared the Pannikins with the Lepels, Pierreponts, &c. “A queer old gentleman,” he thought, “deuced like our gardener at Heatherby !”

Meanwhile, Captain Pannikin said to his wife. “The service is coming to a pretty pitch ! Why, that youngster’s far too old to come to sea. He wore a ring, too, and I smell perfumes yet. The service is going to the devil !”

When the steamer reached Sheerness, Sin-

gleton resolved to make the best of his way to the guard-ship, where he was to pass his examination, but, just as he was landing, he heard a voice cry "Youngster!" and was ordered to go on board the "Sangfroid" hulk, where the "Patagonian's" crew and officers were hulked during her fitting out,—and had to carry with him a box, two large umbrellas, a washhand-stand, and two of the little Pannikins. When he returned from this mission, he went on board the guard-ship, a grand three-decker, in splendid order, and it was when he first entered her middle-deck port, and stood upon the middle deck, that he began to understand what a man-of-war was.

He found himself upon a deck, white and fresh as a tree from which the bark has just been cut: the lines which marked the division of the planks were black and delicate, as if they had been drawn by an artist's brush; above him the beams were beautifully white, while, as far as the eye could reach, was a row of lofty and brilliant cannon, polished so that they shone like ebony. On the sides of the ship were

long, graceful pikes that seemed pointed with silver, and tomahawks which gleamed like mirrors. The capstan was veneered with fine wood, and was handsome enough for a drawing-room ornament; and by the sides of each hatchway, bright cannon-shot rested in their shot-racks, like bagatelle balls in their holes, no less polished, and scarcely less pretty. Seamen, neat, smart, and active, in blue and white, ran noiselessly backwards and forwards. It was a scene that represented in its perfection the pomp and beauty of war!

He was shown, as soon as he announced his object, into the ward-room, where were seated at the table the various respectable old fogies that compose a guard-ship ward-room mess; middle-aged Captains of Marines, Masters of old standing, Lieutenants who pretend to be somebodies, and young Marine officers who are nobodies. They talk of politics without knowledge, and of women without principle; they criticise clubs to which they don't belong, and talk of lords whom they don't know; they are great about

second-rate hotels, and discuss old anecdotes over new wine!

Singleton found the ward-room mess employed as usual; a copy of the *United Service Gazette* was on the table, and the Master was reading it: he looked up—

“A youngster to be examined,” said the Lieutenant, who had been kind enough to bring him in. The master growled. “I say, doctor, you examine him first,” he said, looking up sulkily from his paper.

The doctor threw away a book he was employed upon, and told Singleton to come with him. The young marine officer, who was seated in a corner, thinking of his whiskers, cried, “Don’t hurt him, Doctor!” which was intended to frighten Singleton, who, however, was, on the contrary, rather amused by the youth’s absurdity, and mentally quoted a line in Juvenal, in which mention is made of “sea-calves,” and of which we may be pretty sure the young marine officer never heard. The doctor having taken Singleton into his cabin, bid him draw a long breath, and then punched him in the breast; by

which performance he ascertained the state of his health to be all right, and then it became the duty of the Master to ascertain his intellectual qualifications. A wink passed between some of the mess as the Master addressed himself to this task, for it was popularly believed that old Tobitt's intellectual acquirements were not great; and their own deficiencies by no means prevented his friends from thoroughly seeing his.

"Now, young gentleman," said Tobitt, "I'll give you a turn in Rule of Three, and then we'll see if you can write from dictation!"

Singleton was astonished. From the pompous announcement in the Admiralty's letter, he had expected something terrific in the way of examination, and had come up, primed, as if he were going in for a scholarship.

"You ain't frightened, are you?" asked Tobitt.

Singleton laughed, "Oh, no sir," and with great glee he went through his examination—an examination just fitted to test a youth from a charity-school, *æ*t. 10, but which our authorities, it seems, consider quite 'sufficient for

gentlemen who are to be officers. But ridiculous as it is, it might be as well, some people think, to apply it to certain full-grown gentlemen who are appointed to command ships.

When this was over, Singleton went on board to join his ship, and reported himself on board the "Sangfroid" hulk—a huge black vessel of gaunt aspect, and dirty sides, with shirts hanging to dry between the three poles which occupied the place of masts. Singleton had a good look at her, while the shore-boat which conveyed him and his chest approached slowly through the rolling waves. The ship's company were at dinner. A bumboat,* with an awning of canvass, lay alongside, well stored with red herrings, apples, oranges, little pies, tobacco, &c. ; and on this, a dog-faced monkey perched in the channels was grinning, with a greedy and cunning glance, prospective of an early spring for purposes of robbery.

* I am at a loss as to the origin of this name for the boats which supply our seamen with their "luxuries." But the reader perhaps remembers a formal and rather humorous remark of old Blackstone's about the word "bum-bailiff."

The "Sangfroid" was captured from the French last war, and Singleton, as he gained the deck and looked about him, saw a pistol-shot-hole in one of the cabin windows.

"I'm come to join," said Singleton, to a quarter-master who was walking up and down.

"Mr. Bertie's in charge of the watch, sir," replied the man. "He'll be here directly."

"And who is Mr. Bertie?"

"He is a mate, sir."

"And pray what is a mate?"

"He's a midshipman as has passed, and is a waiting till they choose to make him a lieutenant," replied the quartermaster, looking surprised.

Just as he spoke, there appeared Mr. Bertie, a man probably about thirty-five, but prematurely old, and with his dark hair already dashed with grey. He both slouched and stooped as he walked. His face was rather purple—but not with the *purpureum lumen iuventæ*. One of his fingers was cased in a long finger of glove, for it had been cut by something or other. The truth was, he had

bruised it in striking a man not long before. His eyes were bloodshot, and his look melancholy, but somewhat fierce, and also, it must be added, somewhat intellectual and noble. He wore a seedy uniform, that seemed to fit him very badly.

"Oh, you're come to join, are you? A midshipman, eh?"

"No—a volunteer of the first class."

"Hum! Rather old, ain't you? Well, so much the better, for I'm d—d if it isn't time somebody should join! Here, have I had all the work to do, and it's too bad." And here old Bertie went off into a regular "growl" of the most professional character, and terminated by requesting Singleton to report himself to the commanding officer, and to see whether he would not have the first watch to keep! But probably, the commanding officer, who was Lieutenant Primby, thought it a little too soon to begin making our friend work, so Singleton was left to go down to the gunroom and join his mess.

Descending to an infernal region, which differed chiefly from the regular one, in this, that

the *descensus* was not so *facilis* as it proverbially is—Singleton entered a long gunroom with a stove in it, the pipe of which projected to an enormous length, and ultimately went out at the port. A pewter pot was on the table, with the words, “*O be joyful*,” engraved upon it.

When Singleton entered, a young man in the uniform of a mate, who was sitting reading by the stove, received him very kindly. Singleton had seldom seen a person who united so much acquired to so much natural grace. His face was oval, and of gentle and intelligent expression; his eyes were dark, luminous, and soft. Many a shopkeeper’s wife would have given half the profits of the shop to have had such hands. And his manners were graceful and easy beyond all grace and ease but the highest.

“People usually join the service earlier than you seem to have done,” said the mate to Singleton.

“Why, so I hear, but I am glad I did not.”

“Perhaps it is as well, and this entry at a later period of life some have thought would

be a good thing for the service, if it were made general."

"Ah, that has been meditated as a reform has it?"

"Yes," said the mate. Then he smiled and added, "Not that I like what is now-a-days called reform, much; but you, I suppose, come from a whig family, from your entering just now?"

"Not I, indeed," said Singleton, laughing. "My father, Fontenoy senior, would not thank you for such a supposition, I assure you."

"Indeed," said the other, who seemed pleased to hear this fact. "How did you get your appointment then, for to my knowledge, one of the most eminent prelates on the bench tried a long time to get one for one of his family, but could not, because he was a conservative?"

Singleton explained, and then they had a good deal of conversation on the subject, and Singleton found the mate very well informed and intellectual, and very tenaciously attached to tory opinions.

"But we must be careful how we discuss

these matters before old Bertie," he said laughing. "Bertie is a very queer fellow. He was the eldest son of a gentleman of fortune, but through continued absence from home and neglect of his relations, he managed to let his younger brother in for his inheritance. The younger brother makes him an allowance, however, and when he gets short he comes to sea for economy. He is a violent whig, and almost as strongly attached to his opinions as he is to his bottle. Do you know, he positively has a prejudice against me because I am a lord, and son of a tory peer."

"That seems hard," said Singleton. "May I ask your name? I was not told."

The mate told him. He was Lord Alfred Clarion, son of the Duke of Neville. And he might have added that he was one of the best specimens of his Order in the profession.

Not long afterwards, down came old Bertie, growling and swearing, and helped himself to some port.

"I mean to go on shore this evening, my lord," he said. He generally my—lorded Clarion, not as snobs do, by way of flattery,

but ceremoniously, to mark his own rank as a commoner, and to preserve his dignity. Nothing could have annoyed Clarion more.

"Very well, Bertie," he answered, quietly.

Bertie gave a low, rolling growl. "*Mr.* is a title, my lord, as well as any other," he said.

"Very well, Mr. Bertie," said Clarion, quietly again, and glancing towards Singleton. But old Bertie, who naturally was essentially a good-hearted person, was mollified, and looking up, said, "I did not mean the observation, disagreeably, you know."

"I did not take it so, I assure you." And after this little fencing scene, Bertie took some more wine, and then he called out to Singleton by the usual title of "youngster," to come and help him to unpack a carpet-bag. From this, with Singleton's aid, he dragged out a huge, broad-tailed plain coat, which he meditated wearing that evening on shore. While fumbling in the pockets, he drew out a card bearing the name of "Captain Tinker," and after staring stupidly at it for some time, the old boy burst into a laugh, and speedily communicated the laugh to the others, by explaining

that last time he wore that coat, about three months before; he had had a quarrel in a coffee room with a stranger, which had ended in an exchange of cards. But having returned on board with his brain in a state of confusion, he had forgotten all about it, and it had never returned to his memory till that moment.

“Not that I would not have fought the fellow if I had remembered it,” he said, and this met with ready credence, for Bertie’s pluck was indubitable. The old boy now brought out a pewter basin and began to wash himself in a corner. While he was performing this operation, Singleton looked out of the after port at the shore, where the tribe of Esquimaux who inhabit Sheerness live. Presently he was startled by a tremendous roar of “youngster,” and turning round, he saw Bertie groping about like Polyphemus, with his eyes half blinded with soap, and reduced to desperation by want of a towel.

“Bring a towel, youngster,—quick!”

Singleton rushed to his chest and produced one, which Bertie used with avidity. After

this he borrowed a collar from him, and touched up his ropy old whiskers with a pocket-comb, mounted the eccentric coat, and prepared for his departure.

“Now, youngster, give me down that cocked-hat box.”

Once more Singleton obeyed orders, and took down from the beams a triangular-shaped box of a bronze colour. Diving into this, Bertie raked up a cigar wrapped in paper, and unrolled it. The paper was a five pound note, for he was eccentric in everything. Putting this in his pocket, and biting off the end of the cigar, old Bertie took one more glass of port, and then poured out one for Singleton.

“Drink that, youngster. Here’s luck !” And off he went.

Lord Clarion, who had been still reading by the stove, and glancing up occasionally, smiled as Singleton resumed his seat, and said, “Well, that is a mate of ten years’ standing—one of a breed that will soon be as extinct as the Dodo. But don’t suppose that this apparent barbarism of Bertie’s lies deep. He is a very thoughtful and accomplished

person, and you will like him better by and bye."

"Well, he is a lucky fellow to be waited on by Norman blood," said Fontenoy, laughing. "Kings can have no more."

"Well," said Lord Clarion, "I am glad to see you are good natured. That is a great point. Good nature is the beauty of the mind, and, like personal beauty, wins, almost without anything else,—sometimes, indeed, in spite of positive deficiencies."

At this moment the quartermaster put his head in at the door. "If you please, my lord, Mr. Primby wants you to 'look out,' for he is going on shore."

"Very well, I will do so, tell him." Then turning to Singleton, as he rose to get his uniform cap, Clarion said, with a smile, "Primby is like England in Nelson's signal; he 'expects every man to do *his* duty.'"

With which capital *mot* (which the author must state is not his own, but was heard by him afloat) Lord Clarion departed for the deck.

In the evening other new youngsters who

had joined came down to the berth, and Singleton made their acquaintance. One was young Lord Strawberry, one of the rising hopes of the Whig noble family, De Fraise. Two of his brothers were in the Home Office, one governed a minor colony, one was in the army, and one was a "commissioner." Alfred was sent to pick up what he could for himself in the navy. He was a little, blue-eyed, pale-faced fellow of fourteen; good-natured enough, but not remarkable in other respects. There was also young Bludgeon, son of a banker in the provinces somewhere, who married a lady of family, and so got his share of public appointments; and Box, a sturdy young booby, who had been sent to sea for thrashing the usher where he was at school; and Rowdy Gaffer, son of a magistrate in London, before whom he had once or twice been taken up in the morning, and who had been thus heavily fined by his own parent, who was a conscientious man of the Brutus order.

"It seems there's to be a naval instructor," said Bludgeon, mournfully.

"I'm cussed if I came to sea for that!" cried Box, savagely. "I've had enough of school!"

"I vote we agree to learn nothing," said Gaffer.

"We can easily do that," said Singleton, laughing.

"Hear, hear!" cried Gaffer, taking it up seriously.

"I say," drawled out Strawberry, who was sprawling on the cushions on the lockers, and who now stretched out his arms languidly,—
"I say, Fontenoy, have you seen the Pannikin girls?"

"I saw them this morning."

"What do you think of them, eh?" drawled the boy, listlessly.

"Jemima's what is called a fine girl."

"There's rather too much of her," yawned the noble. "Mother P's slow, and old P's a plebeian."

"Don't give yourself any of your aristocratic airs here," cried Box (whose father, a radical, had bullied Government out of this youth's appointment); "Oligarchy's not the time of day now. But I mean to lick that squinting young Pannikin when I can do it on the sly."

"I don't see why we should be sent to take

care of the Pannikins," said Bludgeon, with a melancholy look.

"I gave one of the children to a policeman, to take charge of, the other day, while I went for a glass of ale," said Gaffer.

"The ship's company are gone to supper," said Box. "I have a tick with the bum-boat woman. We'll devil some herrings, and have some rum and water. We dined too early."

This was agreed to, in the absence of anything more interesting, and Box, putting his head out of the gunroom door, called to somebody to pass the word for boy Brown. This unhappy boy was attendant of the mess, and he presently made his appearance with a very dirty face. He received his orders.

"Please, sir, Mr. McScrimp (this was the assistant-surgeon) said the young gentlemen was not to have rum."

"Curse your impudence, you whelp!" cried Box, ferociously. "Bring the rum *instantly*!"

"I dare not, sir," said the boy.

"Let us cob McScrimp,—I'm game!" cried Box.

“Hear, hear!” cried Gaffer. “He’s down in his dispensary, in the cockpit.”

“Stop,” cried Strawberry; “I can manage him. Boy, Lord Strawberry’s compliments to Mr. McScrip, and would be much obliged for a little of the mess rum.” This was said with great dignity, for this young gentleman had already learned that his title was potent with a certain class of people. Box grumbled, but it seemed the best plan; and indeed it was quite successful. A suppliant lord was a phenomenon that none of the McScrip family, till the present Angus of that name, had ever encountered. It was not in snobbery to resist it, and the rum was thus procured.

So the “youngsters” having the gunroom to themselves that evening (for Clarion retired early) spent it very sociably together, and gave each other long accounts of their families and relations, and what “tin” they would have, and what they did at school. They congratulated themselves on their escape from home, laughed at old Pannikin, vowed vengeance against McScrip, and went to bed in high good humour.

CHAPTER II.

Master. What cheer?

Boatswain. Good : speak to the mariners : fall to't yarely . . . Bestir, bestir.

THE TEMPEST.

Nauticus exoritur vario certamine clamor.

VIRGIL. *Æneid.* iii. 128.

NEXT morning, Singleton awoke for the first time in his life in a hammock, and as he started out of a dream, knocked his head against the beams above rather sharply. But in the cause of our country we must bear these little things. Besides, all this was Action and a Career. At least, so our friend tried to persuade himself. But why anticipate disappointment? It is only at a later period of life, that we begin to discover that there can be no true action, till our spiritual tendencies, and our worldly avocations work in harmony.

He who can achieve that condition, has found his true career. Whereas, to the great majority, viz., those who take up a profession from accident, or interest, the world is nothing but a huge treadmill in which they work away mechanically—either patient animals, or discontented men.

The “Sangfroid” hulk was a line-of-battle vessel, and the midshipmen accordingly slept in the after cockpit, or orlop deck. In the centre of this stood an amputation-table as it was called, (*a non amputando*, I suppose, for no amputations used to take place on it,) but which they used to wash on. Here, stood the row of little pewter basins. Here, the young gentlemen performed their toilettes, each attended by a marine as servant. Singleton got hold of an old Scotchman to attend him, who thought it part of his duty to be paternal, and to give good advice to his master, which was no doubt very disinterested, but which was sometimes rather a bore.

After he had dressed, Singleton was wandering about the main deck, when he perceived the flutter of a green gown on the main ladder, and this apparition was succeeded by the descent of a youthful female, who, encumbered as she was with a large parcel, seemed to

find it difficult to move. Singleton gallantly stepped forward to assist her, and by his aid she landed safely, and then acknowledged the courtesy with a smile. Scarcely had she done so, when a loud, rough voice was loudly exclaiming, "hillo, young gentleman, steady there, keep her away, ho!"

At these words, Singleton looked round, and perceived an elderly man in a blue jacket, with a silver ornament of mysterious shape hanging from his neck, coming up to join them. His manner oddly managed to combine the roughness of a common sailor, with a species of dignity hard to describe.

"Hillo, Bet my lass, kiss your old dad," cried this old boy. And then he turned to Singleton, "I say, my young gentleman's son, you're beginning early. Now you had better just up helm and be off, or I'll see what Captain Pannikin says to it."

"And pray who are you?" inquired Singleton, angrily.

"I am Mr. Bagg, boatswain of H.M.S. 'Patagonian,'" was the reply.

Singleton saw the state of things. The young lady was Miss Bagg, and her father could not but place any but one construction on a midshipman's speaking to her. It was

an unfortunate prejudice, but perhaps natural. However, he spoke very civilly to Mr. Bagg, who allowed himself to be convinced he was mistaken, and then sent his daughter down to the cabin and continued the conversation. "You must excuse me, you see, sir. Young gentlemen are not always to be trusted, and my daughter's just a-growing up. It's dangerous."

Here a voice shouted down the hatchway, "call away the ship's party." Out jumped Mr. Bagg's call, and he gave a tremendous whistle, followed by a tremendous roar. Seamen and marines poured up the ladders in swarms.

"Mr. Fontenoy wanted," cried a quartermaster at that moment, and Singleton ran up on deck, and found that he had to go on board the "Patagonian," with all the other youngsters, to "learn the work" by Captain Panikin's orders.

The "Patagonian" was progressing as fast as ropes, paint, tar, noise, dirt, and swearing could make her. The topmasts were up, and bowsprit out, and the guns were being hoisted in. Perched in the centre, was a smart hatchet-faced Lieutenant giving orders, crying, "blue-jackets" here, and "marines" there, and

though dividing the crew into these ranks, yet occasionally addressing them in comprehensive unity, by an unmentionable designation. Here, mark the force of professional habit. In spite of this, this Lieutenant was a gentleman, and went into very good society,—and waltzed, flirted, and twaddled, like ordinary people. It is quite an affair of habit—and thus, the honest scavenger, when his day's work is over, retires to the bosom of his family, and becomes a decent man.

“Hem, hem,” cried a voice near Singleton, and he beheld Captain Pannikin. The worthy officer was red in the face with exertion, and was somewhat in a state of perplexity. For, not having been afloat since 1818, he kept ordering things to be done which nobody understood, and using language to Lieutenants which they did not like. That morning, he addressed Bertie, as “you, sir,” to that gentleman's intense disgust, so that old Bertie, indeed, came growling down into the gun-room, and swore that he would write for his discharge, and horsewhip him when he obtained it. He offended Primby, the Second Lieutenant, a West-end dandy of some standing, who set an enormous value on people's “connexions,” and consequently despised his

captain, who wore white kid gloves, and carried a delicate telescope, like an overgrown opera-glass. It seemed, that Primby was wearing a rose in his button hole, when Pannikin came up to him.

“Uniform, Mr. Primby, hem! Always wear uniform, hem!”

“Sir?” said Primby rather loftily, drawing himself up, and glancing at what he considered his unexceptionable attire.

“Roses, eh, Mr. Primby? not uniform, hem!”

Mr. Primby removed the rose, but he once again fell into the mistake of putting one on, which caused a feud between him and Pannikin, which was never properly made up. And this, Lord Clarion used to call the “War of the Roses.”

Next, Captain Pannikin had an unpleasantness with his commander, Commander Modell. This was an officer of the school of H.M.S. “Excellent,” and more remarkable for science than seamanship. He was a man of superior understanding, and very considerable information in the severer parts of knowledge. Without a quarrel,—yet it was evident, there could be no sympathy between him and Pannikin.

Again, the first lieutenant and Captain Pan-

nikin had nothing in common. Lieutenant Tressel was a military-naval man. All his sympathies were with the sister service. He had a very military bearing, and wore his coat buttoned up. He made the band play his wife's quadrilles, and was one of the first of the reading public who welcomed with enthusiasm the dawning genius of Mr. Lever.

Thus the materials of considerable disturbance already existed in H.M.S. "Patagonian," 'ere she had left Sheerness. And as similar elements existed in the gunroom mess, Singleton began to think that he should enjoy in his first ship the advantage of seeing a great many of the peculiarities of the profession.

"Hem!" went Captain Pannikin, as I said above. "Mr. Fontenoy, you must be my aide-de-camp. Bring all the youngsters here." And so saying, he drew himself up, and grunted as was his wont. Fontenoy went off accordingly, and returned with my Lord Strawberry, Messrs. Bludgeon, Box, and Rowdy Gaffer. These young gentlemen having been shown into the captain's cabin, Captain Pannikin began to address them on the importance of propriety of conduct in general.

"Now, Mr. Strawberry?"

“Lord Strawberry, if you please, Captain Pannikin.”

“What! Oh, I forgot. Very well then, my lord. But remember, sir, for the future,—never tell your captain he’s wrong. A captain can’t be wrong, ugh, hem!” (These peculiar ejaculations of the captain’s are as difficult to render as the Greek particles, properly—the reader’s imagination and ear must aid). “Do you hear? hem! And, sir, if you were Jupiter Hammon, you should do your work in my ship!”

Why Pannikin peculiarly favoured Jupiter Ammon in preference to Jupiter Olympius, or any other deity, was never discovered, but certain it is, he frequently swore by, and appealed to him. The common notion was, that having by chance once met the name in a book, he had taken some fanciful liking to it.

“Mr. Box, I hear you went on badly at school; be careful here, sir, hem!” Box looked savage.

“Mr. Gaffer, I hope you don’t like rum—eh, ugh, hem!” Here something stuck in the speaker’s throat. Gaffer mentally prayed that he would choke—but he didn’t.

“Mr. Bludgeon, now that you serve the Queen, pray sir, be smart and officer-like,

ugh!" For Bludgeon was one of those creeping, melancholy fellows one sometimes encounters, who have a turn for mechanism—who prowls about the decks, making experiments with tar, and cutting up chips of wood—who execute clumsy models in deal, and make discoveries in steam that have been found out, and rejected, long ago. Thus they are apt to be slovens; they borrow tools from the carpenter's crew, and spoil them; they litter the gunroom with shavings and steel filings, and they crib cartridges from the gunner. Bludgeon having once incautiously stated that he meant to join the Turkish navy by and by, was forthwith raised by the mess to the title of Bludgeon Pasha—varied occasionally by that of Roker Bey. But if Bludgeon's tastes were not elegant they were useful, and he was a very industrious and intelligent fellow.

"Mr. Fontenoy—as you are older than any of the others, I shall expect you to set a good example. I hear you are studious—stick to Inman, sir, ugh!" Mr. Fontenoy bowed.

This discourse finished, Captain Pannikin went to visit the gunroom, which was being painted and prepared for the midshipmen, as it was expected that the hands would shortly shift over from the "Sangfroid" to the ship.

Here he was followed by his faithful youngsters. They found Lord Clarion (who was of an elegant and fanciful taste) superintending the operation.

And, indeed, Singleton was surprised to see how much was capable of being made of such an unpromising place. The beams and the tiller (which traverses this nautical apartment) were painted a very bright white. The two guns were painted white, except the part which was outside the port; and the body of the cabin was done like wainscot. The stanchion itself was under the hands of an ingenious mechanic, who was colouring it in a very brilliant manner.

Captain Pannikin looked round with obvious astonishment at proceedings which had so little in common with those he had been accustomed to in his youth. At last he paused before the stanchion.

“Hem, ugh—what’s that, Lord Clarion, eh? What do you call that?”

“It is an imitation of *lapis lazuli*, sir,” said Clarion, in his low, melodious voice, and bowing.

Pannikin would not have lived in vain if Mr. Leech had been there to catch his air of puzzled astonishment at these words. It was

indeed a picture. It was the old school brought into contact with the new.

“Hem, ah—service changed since my time,” he muttered, and off he went. The youngsters followed in his wake—as he phrased it—and he traversed the decks, one by one. All was animation and activity. Primby was directing the men who were getting in stores, in the voice of a master of the ceremonies; Bertie was bullying away, in his usual style; while Commander Modell, who never condescended to abusive language, stimulated the lazy by the employment of a tone of polished sarcasm and irony, which irritated them ten times as much; for sailors rather like a man who abuses them in good hearty Billingsgate slang, and thus the Patagonians had no great love for the scientific and intellectual Modell, who reproached them in the style of Junius, and affected to imitate Fonblanque, when he was calling out to the fellows on the main-yard!

After this inspection, Captain Pannikin, who was by no means an inhospitable man, took off his faithful youngsters to dine with him at his lodgings on shore. The advent of such a band created no small sensation in the family, and, apparently, some terror; for young

Jacob Pannikin, the cross-jack-eyed (a delicate naval name for one who squints), set up a species of howl, and said, "Pa! there won't be enough!" Box would have liked to thrash him, but unhappily that was impossible while he was under the protection of his Penates; but his father gave a severe grunt, and checked him.

The Pannikins gracefully condescended during dinner, and it went off pleasantly enough. That young aristocrat, Lord Strawberry, who was fast learning the advantages of rank, talked to Mrs. and the Misses Pannikin (the young rogue!) about the fashionable world, all dinner-time, much to Fontenoy's amusement and Box's disgust. What with his eye-glass and this conversation, he was indeed an interesting object of study, but he did not perceive that the worthy Captain himself was not so much impressed by him as the women; indeed, Captain Pannikin, though a Tory (until the late election at Potborough, that is,) had rather a dislike (arising from a mixture of early prejudice and personal pomposity,) to people of title.

When they left the house in the evening (with strict injunctions to return on board the hulk immediately), young Strawberry pro-

posed that they should go to some billiard rooms. Not being much taller than a billiard table himself, this seemed odd,—but the Navy is the most precocious of all schools, and they went accordingly. The marker, with a proper respect for their uniform, showed them every attention, and Lord Strawberry availed himself of a stool to stand upon, that he might do full justice to his powers.

“What cussed airs that young whelp gives himself!” said Box to Fontenoy, confidentially, as the party were sauntering down to the jetty, to take a boat to go off to the hulk.

“The Pannikins were civil to-day, eh?” said Strawberry, as they rowed along; “A worthy fellow, the Captain!”

“You need not have come it quite so strong about your titled fellows,” said Box, sulkily.

“Is it my fault that I belong to the aristocracy? I can’t help being noble, can I, Fontenoy?” said Strawberry, with a melancholy whine.

Box growled, and they said nothing further on the subject, but reached the hulk in peace.

Day by day the fitting progressed, and still higher and higher stretched the tall spars of the line-of-battle ship to the sky, and cordage

gathered between her lofty masts thick and intricate, like a gigantic web ; the plain yellow colour of her sides was changed for the chess-board chequered black and white, which, if I mistake not, was first introduced by Nelson. The crew had shifted over from the "Sangfroid"—our friend Bertie having taken care, before parting finally with the gunroom, to carve sundry words deep into the table, regardless of the disfigurement. It was only by regularly damaging, in this kind of way, the deal tables formerly supplied, that our officers shamed the authorities into furnishing them with the more pretentious articles now in use in the service. Here, the philosopher may observe a type of that extraordinary species of public polity called Agitation—which, by an analogous process, damages the present good, in the effort to secure a future one ! Pity it has not always the same success !

At last, the "Patagonian" received orders to proceed round to Portsmouth, prior to leaving England. New officers joined. She went out to the Nore, and took her powder on board. Then she spread her white sails to the wind, and curved her first line in the blue waters of the Channel.

At Spithead more officers joined, who will be introduced to the reader as occasion requires. Public wants caused every dispatch to be made in manning the vessel, and preparing to proceed to her station. For a cloud was gathering in the east, and the stately and gorgeous Albanian, and the gay Syrian, and the grave Ottoman, were assembling for war.

Before she finally weighed, she was inspected by my Lord Muddle, of the Twopenny Claudian Family, of the English Patrician Order. He was a sullen, sallow man, with a worldly face, and a cunning eye. He bowed to the officers, and remarked jocularly as he passed the compasses, that they were "very useful things"—rather superfluous information to a sailor, but then we must remember, that this lord was a governor of the navy under our present system, and was of course anxious to show that he had some acquaintance with nautical matters. He went round the ship, then announced that he would go on shore again, and was walking with that object towards the stern, when Captain Pannikin, not without a suppressed grin, conducted him to the gangway.

"Hands up anchor!" A whistle, and the

rush of many feet, and the huge bars are placed in the capstan, and the men bend over and embrace them eagerly. The band strikes up a shrill, stirring melody. Stamp! stamp! Round goes the capstan. The iron cable and messenger rattle noisily along the lower deck, like the chains of the damned. The huge ship sways heavily head to wind, and the white waves beat against her bows, as she advances to the spot where the anchor lies.

“Loose sails, man the rigging, ’way aloft!” The masts and yards swarm with men, thick as the leaves were upon them once, long, long ago. High up towards the sky, where the light royal masts taper, young sailor boys are climbing like squirrels. The word is given to let fall. Down falls the white canvass. Hoist away! And you see the topsails rising and fluttering in the wind, full of life.

“Heave and a-weigh!” The cable is tight. The anchor lies deep in the earth’s embrace far below. But human arms are strong. The capstan bars are hugged desperately—like the embrace of love—like the embrace of death. Together! “Can the earth which is dead and a vision, resist spirits that have reality and are alive?”* There is a break—a start—a mad

* Sartor Resartus.

rush. Round spins the capstan, like a dancing Dervish. The sails shiver, as in fear. What, had the fair green Isle of Wight broken from its moorings, and like old Delos, taken to swim on the sea that loves it so well? Ah, we are away! The mighty yards are swung to the wind, and the "Patagonian," sublime in its ugliness—like Mirabeau—is off to sea.

It was evening—evening in the early summer, and sunset. The glorious old sun was drowning in the blue ocean. All the west blazed with colour, and he seemed to be turning the wide sea into wine! There are no perfumes from thy shore, oh England, but there is refreshment in the gaze on thy green hills. Pleasant are thy white dwellings, and fair are thy snowy cliffs.

A calm came soon. The sea was covered with shipping. There lay little fishing boats with sails motionless in calm, and looking like white butterflies resting on blue flowers. The line-of-battle ship, herself, was still as a sleeping giant. Her sails hung lazily down, and her long, bright pendant drooped, and twined round the top-gallant backstays like a gaudy snake.

CHAPTER III.

Oh, the glorious city, shining far away !
With its domes and steeples tall,
And the sunlight over all.

* * * * *

Oh the glorious city, beautiful to see !

CHARLES MACKAY.

THERE are only two things that are of the slightest value against sea-sickness, and these are brandy and fresh air. When you begin to feel the fatal qualms stealing over you—take some brandy and go on deck. There is nothing else for it. Then, the more pluck you have the better. When you are ill, give in—but like a man, like a gladiator who sees there is no chance, but yet even yields boldly. Then take more brandy, and keep on deck. However, how vain all advice on this terrible matter is ! Talk of the *maladie de pays* ! What is that to the *maladie de mer*. It has a

tragic interest too, this miserable illness. For when the good old Cicero (dear to all men of letters be his name!) was flying from the savage debauchee who murdered him, he took to the sea, and sea-sickness drove him on shore to his assassins.

How wretched Fontenoy was in the Bay of Biscay, through which the old "Patagonian" thundered under double reefs with a fair wind! However, he hit upon the remedies mentioned above, while poor little Strawberry was nearly defunct in the after cockpit, and Box suffered martyrdom; for he lay down miserably on the lockers in the gunroom, and an old mate cruelly provoked him by dangling a piece of fat pork, on a string, before his languid eyes! A delicate piece of humour this! But then it was an *old* mate, one of those, no doubt, who in former times, used to spit in their glass of grog, before going out of the gunroom, to prevent any one from appropriating it, in their absence!

When the weather became milder, the "youngsters" had to go to school. What an Academe! A canvass screen surrounded a wooden table; inside this, they sat with the naval instructor, Mr. Bobb, who taught them to dislike navigation. Mr. Bobb might have

taught Charon how to navigate the Styx as far as sympathy and kindred thought went. He was an eminently disagreeable little man, with some science, and no literature. He knew nothing of the classics, but could teach French—I mean the Clapham dialect of it. He had a prejudice against the Church of England as vulgar men often have, and had a great love of money. So he sneered at, and avoided the Chaplain, and was most intimate with the purser. This was another Scotchman, (for I have mentioned McScrimp, the assistant surgeon, already), by name McStirk. McStirk and Bobb used to retire to a cabin and discuss a bottle together. McStirk bullied his purser's steward so, that it was supposed to be the chief reason why that poor fellow, who was always of a melancholy turn, one day committed suicide in the bread-room.

In addition to Mr. Bobb, the youngsters were instructed by the boatswain, by Captain Pannikin's express orders, in the art of making knots. There is the "running bowline," and the "fisherman's bend" and the "crown," and heaven knows how many more. Box studied all these, for he had a great ambition to be able to make a "colt" which is a curious instrument of chastisement used by naval men.

It was this occupation that first brought Singleton into any intimate communication with Commander Modell. The youngsters were assembled on the main-deck, each with a piece of "inch-and-a-half," and Singleton was working away in a state of great perplexity when Commander Modell came up and said "What are you doing there, Mr. Fontenoy?"

"Making a 'Matthew Walker,' sir," answered Singleton, touching his hat, and looking ruefully at the rope. Now, the said 'Matthew Walker,' if I remember right, is a regular Gordian knot in its difficulty.

"Ah," said Modell, looking at the performance, "you had better get the boatswain to show you how to do it."

"It's certainly a '*dignus vindice nodus*,'" replied Singleton, by a sudden impulse of facetiousness, and smiling.

The Commander started. Then he smiled also in a queer, grim kind of way. "Very good, Mr. Fontenoy, but for the future, sir, remember if you please, that it's not customary in the service to pun to your superior officer." Singleton begged his pardon, and was considerably abashed, but Commander Modell was rather prepossessed in his favour from that day, though Singleton did not know it.

In the meantime, the gunroom mess seemed threatened with one of those movements known in modern times as a "disruption." Party spirit ran so terrifically high! And no wonder—when we remember that at that time no tory could expect promotion, and that every whig expected it as a matter of course. The tory mates used accordingly to lick the whig youngsters, and so on—and upon the whole, this political mess, when we consider the purity of its political motives, the profundity of its knowledge, and how much principle had to do with its party violence, was no bad type of more important assemblies!

One morning, when they were in sight of the coast of Portugal, some sixteen of the mess were assembled in the gunroom, variously employed. Lord Clarion was reading, on a chair near the larboard gun; so was Somers, a very sharp little mate of the tory party, with an eye quick enough to see everything but his own faults. Lovell, a tall, thin, spoony midshipman, usually called "Lady Margaret," was cleaning a flute which he dared not attempt to play. The second master, old Plebbe, was making a lunar on some dirty paper. Snigg, the clerk—a facetious, satirical fellow, was dozing off the effects of last night's rum on the

lockers. Singleton was reading. Strawberry was asleep, while Box was cautiously stealing away the desk which supported his head. Bludgeon, as usual, was making a model with some hard wood and a blunt knife.

In came old Bertie, who had had the morning watch, and had just been dressing himself in the cockpit. Every pimple on his purple old face had an irate look. Clarion and Somers interchanged glances.

"Good morning, Bertie," said Lord Clarion.

"I wish you a good morning, my lord," said Bertie, with a very low and formal bow. Then he glanced round the lockers, and perceived that they were almost wholly tenanted by "youngsters." So he coolly went and seized young Strawberry by the legs, and slowly dragged him away from his resting-place.

"Come, young shaver, you have all night in: make room for me."

"Don't hurt his lordship," said that malignant young imp, Box, who wished to see a row.

"What, do you call that thing a lord?" cried Bertie, lifting up the unhappy noble by his trousers and coat, in imitation of a well-known saying of Brummell's. There was a great roar of laughter, and Strawberry was

furious as he was put down again. Just as Bertie was composing himself to sleep, a hideous noise, which was positively unearthly, resounded through the room. The fact is, that *the band* of the ship had their mess on the lower deck, just outside the gunroom, and next to it. And this noise was occasioned by a fit of playfulness which had suddenly seized the gentleman who performed on the bassoon. This proximity of the band was one of the standing nuisances of the mess, a standing grievance, and apparently unavoidable. Over and over again had the master of the band been bullied about such noises—over and over again had he faithfully promised there should be no “practising” anywhere but in the cable-tier.

There was a general laugh, just now, at this noise, and everybody glanced at Bertie, who was lying with his eyes shut. He was a sworn foe to all music, and particularly to this band.

The facetious clerk, Snigg, awoke at this moment, tolerably refreshed by his slumber, and wiped away a kind of apoplectic foam that used to gather about his lips during his stertorous repose. Indeed, Snigg’s being seized with apoplexy was a thing confidently expected by the mess, facetiously alluded to by many,

and rather wished for, as a lark, by some. He now rubbed his eyes, and said—

“The wedding-guest he beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon !”

Snigg was a very tolerable wag, and had once read a great deal ; for, for the last six years, he had got on without replenishing his old stock.

Just as he said this, another sepulchral sound issued from the band’s mess. Up jumped Bertie.

“By G—, this is too bad !” he cried. “I’ll leave the ship, hang me if I don’t !” .

“It is shameful,” said Lord Clarion.

“Orpheus went to hell,” said Snigg ; “and hang me if every cussed musician oughtn’t to follow.”

“I shall cut the service, and join the Guards,” drawled young Strawberry.

“Hillo—he’s taken worse,” cried Box, as a still more dismal sound was heard.

“Human nature can stand it no longer !” said Bertie. So he jumped up, opened the door, and roared out to the master of the band to come in immediately. The poor man entered, cap in hand very civilly, and was severely lectured by Bertie for ten minutes. When he had gone—

"Hang bands!" said Bertie; "there were no such things when I joined the service."

"I thought you liked reform," said Somers, with a sneer.

"I like reform, of course, and so do all but the selfish, who lose power by it," said Bertie; "but every innovation is not a reform."

"Hear, hear!" cried Clarion, markedly. The tories laughed, and looked at Bertie.

"I suppose that noise means something," said Bertie, sarcastically; "but I should like to know what. Some brays are as bad as the braying of the band trumpets."

Here the whigs laughed. Box was charmed; a quarrel among the "oldsters" was honey to him.

"Nae doot o' that," said McScrip, with a most hideous wink and leer at Clarion and Somers.

Poor McScrip intended this as a sarcasm against Bertie. He had no opinions himself but toadied Clarion (who despised him), in the vague and dismal hope that he would, at some future day, be allowed to promenade his raw-boned figure in the saloons of Neville House.

"Particularly the *braes* of bonnie Doon," said Snigg, looking at him and mimicking.

There was here a general laugh at McScrip

from both parties. Box shouted and roared in a most exaggerated style ; so McScrip fastened on him, as a youngster, and struck him. Box was fierce, but McScrip was twice as old, and three times as strong : he got him on the lockers, and struck him hard two or three times. Box's eyes flashed fire ; he was as savage as a young bull-dog : in the impotence of his wrath, he spit in McScrip's face. The Scotchman knocked his head against a desk savagely.

There was a loud cry of "shame," but the oldsters did not like to interfere with one of their own order. Unfortunately thrashing was not a very rare phenomenon, and Lord Clarion, besides, was somewhat disgusted with Box's spitting, although so provoked. The chastisement continued, when, with a spring, Fontenoy, whose blood boiled like a torrent, rushed at McScrip, and gave him a terrible facer between the eyes. McScrip uttered a cry, —struck out at Singleton,—hit him in the middle of the face. Whew ! in an instant the blood of the De Fontenots—that Norman blood, on which poor Singleton prided himself—was spurting all over his face. As he drew breath, he tasted it : he rushed at McScrip

again. Box had jumped up ; and the bully was pinned by the throat.

“ Stop it, stop it,” cried half-a-dozen fellows, rushing to the spot.

“ No, by G——” said Bertie, who saw that M’Scrip had gone down, and that Rowdy Gaffer had pounced in at this crisis, to join his brother youngsters. Old Bertie grew ferocious at the sight of blood and fighting.—“ The man that meddles must dare to touch me !”

“ I appeal to you as a gentleman, and a man of sense and feeling,” cried Clarion, coming up.

Here M’Scrip groaned. The youngsters were frightened. Clarion drew back Box, who seemed to stick to his victim, like a gorging leech. Bertie cooled,—the combatants rose up,—they were separated.

“ Go below, and wash yourselves, for heaven’s sake,” said Clarion, laughing ; “ we positively must have a Riot Act to read in this mess.”

Box, with a desperately swollen lip, looked fiercely round. He could scarcely see Singleton, but he came up to him, and shook his hand like a madman, and began to cry.—“ It ain’t the licking I got, (sob, sob, went Box,

nearly choking,) it's because you (sob, sob,) were hit!—Bless you, old fellow.”

Singleton luckily came off safe, as regarded the eyes. He wiped his face with one of the handkerchiefs that Augusta Lepel had worked his crest in. It was a nice time to be reminded of her!

The youngsters descended to the cockpit, and roared out for their servants.—Down came two or three marines.

“Lor, how gash ye look, Muster Fontenoy!” said Geordie Webb, his servant.

“Water,” said Singleton briefly.

“Ay, ay; ye need it, I’m thinking; ay, ay. Noo, sir, ye ken,—”

“Water, Webb.”

“Ay, ay,” said Webb, who did not seem to be quite as sober as he might have been. In truth, it was thought by some people, that old Webb had acquired the art (sometimes acquired at sea,) of going through all his duties with mechanical propriety, when considerably intoxicated, and keeping clear of punishment, without losing the enjoyment of rum.

Webb slowly raised the chest, took out the basin, looked in it, rubbed it vaguely, then started to the main-deck to the tank for the

water. While his master was bathing himself, he stood by, respectfully, with a towel—

“ Let dogs delight,
To bark and bite,”

began Webb, musingly.

“ Hold your tongue, Webb.—Hand me that bottle.”

Webb brought out the *Eau-de-Cologne*, and first put it to his nose before handing it to his master.

Singleton looked at the bottle and shook it. “ I hope, Webb, you don’t drink this?” he said, pouring some out into the hollow of his hand, to bathe his forehead with.

If he had said this to an English servant, the man would have bridled up, denied it with indignation, and begged he would provide himself with another man. But Webb was Scotch and the lower orders of Scotland are the best educated in Europe, as we all know.

So he gave a quiet series of satirical chuckles. “ Hech, hech, sir, that’s nae sae bad !” and appeared to treat the idea as too ridiculous for refutation. The truth was that Webb *had* tried the bottle, and considered it “ puir stuff, but better than naething.”

“ Hech, hech, sir,” he continued, “ I tell ye

hoo ye may mak sure o' my na drinking it,—gie me some rum !”

“ A clean handkerchief, Webb;” and having got this without more parley, Singleton returned to the gunroom. Box, whose swollen lip pouted enormously, was there. McScrip was in his dispensary, and had put himself in the sick-list. The same was done for Box, by the other assistant-surgeon, through the agency of Lord Clarion, who, with characteristic good nature, managed to hush up the affair, and prevent its being brought before the quarter-deck authorities. All such complaints to Captain Pannikin ended unpleasantly, for that great officer having no capacity for analyzing, and pronouncing, on conflicting evidence, used to sum up generally, by saying that “ both parties were in the wrong,” which at least was impartial, and which was certainly brief.

At one o'clock the mess sat down to dinner, with all dispatch, for the ship was drawing near land. There was soup at each end, and at one end presided McScrip. The youngsters sat next him. This is one of the comforts of the service; you must sit, for weeks and weeks, near a person to whom you don't speak, and who perhaps hates you mortally. “ Soup, Mr. Box,” said McScrip sulkily.

"If you please," said Box savagely.

"I'll trouble you for the salt," said McScrip to Gaffer, with the look of a demon.

Gaffer passed it, with the glance of a ghoul. Very agreeable all this, thought Singleton, who was in a state of remorse and disgust.

"This is very good soup," said Strawberry, good naturedly.

"Soup and bully, eh?" said Snigg, nudging him and glancing towards McScrip. Box gave a ghastly grin.

"Mr. Box, a glass of Marsala?" said old Bertie, in a marked tone, while some of the mess laughed. McScrip looked like the Dweller of the Threshold. Box, who was ready to take wine with anybody, or indeed without ceremony, drank very cordially. The Patagonians had two quarter-casks of that popular wine suspended in the gunroom, to say nothing of supplies below. What would Benbow say, could he see a midshipman's mess at dinner now-a-days? Well, let him sleep on!—if he wakes a few years hence, I dare say he will see a *cordon bleu* presiding at the galley-fire!

"Hands, bring ship to an anchor," cried a quarter-master, abruptly thrusting his head in at the door, almost before dinner was over.

The mess rushed on deck, and Singleton

to the mizen-top, which was his station, and where, like the celebrated cherub, he had to "sit up a-loft." The ship was running up the Tagus with a fair wind. The deep rich blue waters were sparkling in the sun, and sunlight streamed over the fair undulating hills and valleys, with their bright villages and spacious vineyards,—fair nurses of different children, pauper peasants, and rich grapes.

Near the man at the wheel stood a singular figure, the Portuguese pilot. This was a little fellow in a red night-cap and jack boots, with a tawny wrinkled face, like a decayed lemon. Fixing his eyes on a known village or house, on shore, he guided himself by such landmarks, and accompanied each direction with a little convulsive jerk of his right hand. "Mak him stabboard; go, port!" There was perfect silence on board as the ship ran on, broken occasionally by a plunge of the lead in the water, and the long, low, wailing cry of the man in the chains, as he gathered in the dripping line, and sang out the depth found.

Captain Pannikin paraded the poop with his huge glass. Lieutenant Primby was on the quarter-deck, occasionally pulling up his white gloves, and arranging his collar and odorous

*Captain Pannikin - Lieutenant Primby -
The Pilot - The Tagus -
in the (distance) of 30 years -*

curls. The military Tressel presided on the forecastle ; the scientific Commander Modell stood on one of the quarter-deck carronade slides.

“ Main-top, there,” cried Modell ; “ where is the industrious Jones ? ”

“ Here I am, sir,” cries the captain of the top, in high indignation.

“ Ah ! let us have some variety to-day ! Let us see the top-gallant studding-sails come in properly. Pray, sir, is that a tinker in the cross-trees, or the congenial cobbler ? ” I have already mentioned that Modell was of the new school, and never used abusive language ; but I hardly know why an honest tinker or cobbler should be so contemptible in nautical eyes ; yet there can be no bitterer reproach than to compare a seaman to one of these mechanics.

“ Take in the studding-sails and royals,” said Pannikin, from the poop, with a grunt.

“ Lower studding-sail tripping-line ; topmast studding-sail down-haul ; topmen up, to take in topgallant studding-sails,” cried Modell. “ Now, then, start the tack before the yard’s down,” cried he, ironically ; “ do,—if you please, and snap the boom. Shorten sail ! ”

Away started the flapping canvass, and was

got in very smartly. Pannikin gave a satisfied grunt ; for it was perceptible that the "Braganza," Portuguese frigate, was lying in the anchorage, with her great, gaudy stern blazing in the sun, besides one or two of our own ships ; and it was advisable that the "Patagonian" should make a good appearance before them ; and a gentleman, who unhappily finds his pantaloons yielding while he is in a quadrille, suffers lightly, in comparison with a sensitive Captain, who finds his ship disgrace herself in the eyes of a smart squadron. Poor Pannikin ! he knew not what was impending.

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le my
ing but
more
The breeze blew ; the sails bellied out gracefully. On flew the ship over the violet river ; the sweet shrubs that grow on the banks, worthy of the golden reputation of the stream, offered up grateful incense to the coming children of the north ; hill and valley, and woods of earth's fairest plumage, and fruits that hang like jewels on mother earth's fair neck, were around them ; above—a smiling Heaven ; before—more and more distinct grew the town of Lisbon, stretching over rocky hills, with antique buildings, venerable by age, and gardens beautiful as youth.

The ship was going ⁷nine knots. The word was given to shorten sail; the fore-topsail, from some reason or other, stuck. *The fore-topsail stuck.*

"Let go the halyards," roared Pannikin. *Let go the halyards to the ship - H.*

Now, Mr. Tressel on the fore-castle hearing the words "let go," conceived that such a desperate roar could only mean let go the anchor; accordingly this was done. The ship was brought up suddenly; there was a desperate confusion. One fluke of the best bower-anchor was broken; there was delay, confusion, humiliation. Mr. Tressel was put under arrest; the effect of the entrée was destroyed; Pannikin was furious, and the "Patagonian" disgraced.

Why linger over the painful scene? Let us come down to the gunroom. Two hours have elapsed; the ship has been brought properly to an anchor, and all is over.

"I shall go on shore," said Clarion, "and visit the Aqueduct."

"I want to go to the Opera," said Somers. "Tadolini sings here, I dare say."

"I want to go to Cintra," said Lovell.

"I mean to visit the churches," said Plebbe.

"I want some ices," said Strawberry, with a sigh.

"I shall go and see the grave of Fielding," said Fontenoy.

"Bravo, youngster," cried Bertie; "I will go with you. I swear by Tom Jones!"

CHAPTER IV.

Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et sæva sonare
Verbera :

ÆNEID. vi. 557-8.

Man is a noble animal splendid in ashes and pompous in the grave.

SIR THOMAS BROWN.

THE "Patagonian" had left the Tagus ; had passed the huge rock of Gibraltar, with its batteries lying like crouched lions at its feet ; had gone through the Straits, and entered the Mediterranean. It was a fine morning. The sun was shining ; the water smooth ; the wind lively and fair—and there was a seaman going to be flogged. A picture of naval life would be incomplete without such a scene. And Britannia, in her character of ruler of the waves, ought to be painted with a "cat" in her hand. Who paints Tisiphone, except—

. . *ultrix accincta flagello*,*

as Virgil has it? Or who draws Discord, unless—

With bloody chaplets in her snaky hair!

after the same great master? Then, why paint Britannia without the proper accessories—if it be true, as was said by Napoleon, (for which see Montholon's book,) that her discipline afloat is only maintained by the "most barbarous terror?" I shall be told that the old system is altered and amended. My friends—read the life of Collingwood, and you will see that he maintained his ship in the most admirable order without a tithe of the flogging now carried on in any average vessel. And this was nearly half a century ago! What makes the difference? The difference is in the commanders! It is a known fact, that some officers can dispense with the lash altogether. The thing then *can* be done. Why is it not so, universally? Because the selection of officers is bad; because the education of officers is bad; because, if a man finds himself allowed to govern men as beasts, he will not take the trouble to try and govern them in any other way. Under the existing system, the

* *ÆNEID*. lib. vi. 570.

blood shed in flogging is offered up in honour of the stupidity and baseness of the captain who flogs—as much as was that of the young Spartans to the Diana Orthia !*

“Punishment at seven bells,” said the quarter-master, coming down into the cockpit, about six in the morning.

“D—n punishment !” cried Somers.

“You think it wrong, eh ?” asked Singleton, whose hammock was next his, and who was prepared to turn out.

“Cursed wrong, to rout me out, this way, after I’ve had the middle watch !”

“I say—there’s a fellow going to be flogged !” said Box, running up to Singleton’s hammock, with an air of great curiosity.

“Well—so much the worse,” said Singleton, peevishly. He was beginning to grow irritable, now and then, in spite of his good nature.

“I think,” said Lovell, philosophically, “that fellow made a point of getting flogged, because he knew I would be lazy this morning.”

“They used to flog the youngsters when I joined the service,” said Somers, looking at Box. Box grinned in a triumphant manner,

* See Plutarch’s “Life of Lycurgus.” (Langhorne’s *Translation*,) and note *in loc.*

and shook young Strawberry's hammock by the clews.

"Be quiet, Box," said Strawberry, drowsily.

"Come, rouse and bitt!" cried Box, who in a few weeks had mastered the slang of the service, and I must also add, had really acquired a good deal of seamanship. "Rouse out—show a leg!"

"Ah, you youngsters ought to have been in the service when I joined," pursued Somers. "Youngsters, I tell you, were flogged then."

"Were you ever flogged?" asked Singleton, quietly.

"Well, I'm d—d! It's like your impudence to ask such a question."

"Why? You say you were a youngster, and youngsters were flogged."

"Well, my sea-lawyer," said Somers, sneeringly, "did I say I was one of them?"

"I see nothing in you to suppose that you were likely to be in any way superior to the general mob!" said Singleton, with a sarcastic sneer.

"I can tell you, my friend, that you stand a very good chance of being licked," said Somers, turning very red.

Singleton, who was washing at the moment, at his chest, looked up very quietly indeed,

and continued, "Ah, you are right rather to trust to your ruffianism, than your arguments."

Somers advanced to him with a threatening look.

"Stop, my friend," said Singleton : "touch me, and I write for a Court of Inquiry."

There was a general laugh at this preposterous announcement from a youngster ; but it luckily happened that old Bertie, who was also performing his ablutions at this time, came over to that part of the cockpit. Bertie, who could rarely manage without borrowing some toilette article or other, used to patronise Singleton in this way, and indeed rather liked him. So he interfered, and no further altercation took place.

Seven bells (half-past seven) came, and the hands were turned-up to attend punishment. The ship's company gathered together in the waist and gangways in dense masses, close up to the mainmast. The officers, with swords on, were on the quarter-deck. On the starboard side of the deck, just abaft the gangway, stood the apparatus of punishment : two capstan-bars secured against the bulwarks, with a grating between them, and a grating below, constituted the simple preparation. Near

this was the master-at-arms, with a little cup of water for the benefit of the victim ; and two boatswain's mates were in attendance, with canvass bags containing the implements of torture. Take away God's sky, and the free sea round about, and you might have fancied you were in the Inquisition chambers in their palmiest day !

"All ready, sir," said the master-at-arms to Commander Modell, who looked very gloomy and pensive.

Modell moved aft to the Captain's cabin. There was a slight sensation among the crowd of seamen ; the guard of marines on the poop fixed bayonets. Captain Pannikin came out of his cabin with his cocked hat and sword on, and moved forward with an awkward pomp to the scene. It would be ignorance of human nature to assert that it was cruelty on his part that made him flog ; on the contrary, he was, in his way, a kind and well-meaning man. But he had no talent for governing a ship without it : he found it established as a system, and availed himself of it. He did not like it ; but he thought no more of it than a butcher does of killing a calf.

The prisoner (Williams, a forecastle-man)

was one of those stolid, ruffianly fellows sometimes encountered at sea—thoroughly valuable sailors, but untameable—who will do any work, but who can with difficulty be subjected to any discipline ; men who are constantly exposing themselves to being flogged, but whom it is no use flogging. On this occasion he had been drunk, and when similar temptation came in his way, would get drunk again. Love of a man like Nelson might have kept him dutiful : flogging he did not care for.

Captain Pannikin, as I said, came forward, and the prisoner was brought before him. Pannikin was very red, and felt it necessary to make some sort of speech. It was pitiable to hear the attempt : he stuttered, and stammered, and grew confused.

“Sorry to have to do it—very sorry—necessity—drunk—sorry—STRIP !”

The last word was said more clearly. Yet, such is the overwhelming force of circumstances, that the dread power which Pannikin was using at that moment saved his poor, paltry address from seeming contemptible !

“Strip !”

The prisoner stripped himself as coolly as a man going to bathe. His bust was a model

for a bust of Hercules ; he stepped with a free tread on the grating, and was firmly secured there, in the usual way.

The clerk, Mr. Snigg, handed Captain Pan-
nikin the warrant and the article of war : the
Captain read them, and then motioned to the
first boatswain's mate. This functionary
stepped forward, and drew from the canvass
bag his "cat"—rather a handsome implement
—the tails brilliantly white—the handle
neatly, and indeed fancifully, covered with
green baize !

At this moment—it seems scarcely credible,
but such is the fact—the facetious Snigg drew
near Singleton, and whispered—

"That's what I call *letting the cat out of the
bag* !"

Was this cruelty in Snigg ?—Not so ; it was
another example of habit. He had made the
same joke in many ships—particularly in the
"Bustard," in the West Indies, Captain Poker,
who flogged his men "on principle," and who
had to make good, out of his pay, a deficit
of a hundred gallons of the ship's rum, which
he and Snigg (who was his acting purser) had
consumed, by the time she was paid off, in
addition to their regular allowance.

Singleton was very pale, and fumbled ner-

vously with his dagger: he drew his breath involuntarily, as if the blow was to fall upon himself. There was a deep silence, which nothing disturbed but the low rumbling sound of the ship's wheel, turned by the helmsman.

A whistle—down came the lash. And on the fair white flesh dawned a row of delicate crimson lines.

“One,” cried the master-at-arms.

Singleton gasped; but the man who received the blow betrayed no more emotion than if he had been made of granite.

“Two — three — four,” and so on, were counted, up to “One dozen, sir.”

The man's back, that had been like white marble, was now like marble veined: it flushed with angry crimson. But he uttered no word—gave no symptom of feeling; till presently stoicism became anger.

“Go on—go on: you're a poor old fool. Your wife told me you was!”

“Whom do you speak to?” cried the captain.

“Any —— that chooses to take it up.”

There was an uneasy feeling among the officers: it is always a very delicate question how to act with regard to words spoken by a man under punishment. Shall we deal judi-

cially with what we wring from torture?—that would be *too* like the Inquisition!

The second boatswain's mate brought out a fresh cat. For the tails of the first hung clotted and bloody as a Fury's hair! This cat was adorned with red baize. A pleasing variety, and an artistic contrast!

The punishment went on: the man seemed about to roar out some new insolence, when there was a sudden confusion among the officers—a rush, a crowd, loud whispers.

“What is the matter?” said Captain Panikin, in a low, eager voice, turning round.

“Mr. Fontenoy has fainted, sir,” said Commander Modell, in a whisper.

Singleton was carried down the companion-ladder into Mr. Primby's cabin, which was nearly opposite the foot of it, on the main-deck. As he opened his eyes, they lighted on a sweet face: for Primby, who, besides his affectations, had good feelings and a somewhat elegant taste, had a portrait of his sister there. And the sister was a very beautiful girl.

“Dear me—what a heavenly face!” said Singleton, waking up in a bewildered way, and staring at the drawing, without the smallest recollection of himself for an instant.

Primby, who had helped to carry him down, laughed, and sprinkled his face with some water.

Singleton came round, gave a slight, sick, shudder, and then jumped up, and thanked the Lieutenant.

"Sit still, Mr. Fontenoy, for a few moments," said Primby, good-naturedly. "Punishment's over." The man, indeed, had been cast off, and sent to the sick-bay, and thence to walk the poop, and air his bruised frame at his leisure. Singleton sat down accordingly, and a long conversation took place between him and Primby, which ended in a very friendly intimacy.

A few days passed, during which the man Williams, who had been flogged, was a "marked man." Toadyley, the mate of the upper deck, had "his eye on him," as he called it. Well might a poor fellow believe in the Evil-eye—that strange superstition—who had to encounter the watching glance of Toadyley! Cunning and cruel—plausible and sycophantic—Toadyley was a valuable servant, and a dangerous enemy. Williams did his work sullenly, and sometimes seemed to grow desperate. Singleton, who observed constantly the moral phenomena of the ship for purposes

of study, wondered how this would end. There was a lesson in store for him.

One evening, the hands were turned up, as usual, to "reef topsails," just after quarters. Captain Pannikin had dined, and with a red face and bloated look, paced the poop, telescope in hand.

The word was given to take a reef in the fore-sail. A man ran up by the fore-stay—slipped as he reached the collar—and fell down on deck. He was picked up insensible, and carried down to the sick-bay. It was soon known that there had been an accident all over the ship. Captain Pannikin gave a loud damn—(it was his expression of sorrow and sympathy)—and one of the fore-castle men took a swab, and swabbed up the blood. There was an emotion of terror, succeeded by a gloom, through the whole floating colony. The hands were piped down, and the watch called.

At nine that night, Singleton went up on the main-deck to take a walk. He saw a screen hung up between two of the guns. It formed a kind of cabin, and inside it gleamed the light of a lantern, which flickered and played over the white canvass with a ghastly yellow glare. A strange silent spot this, in

the darkening shades of night! What holy mystery was here?

Singleton approached, and moving one side of the screen gently, looked in. There lay a grating; on the grating, an object covered with a red ensign. There is a double symbolic value in that ensign of brave England! It floats over the warrior in victory, and it wraps him round in death! What a melancholy spectacle is that—the stiff, symmetrical form of manhood—when the man is gone!

As Singleton turned away, the sentry touched his arm, and said respectfully, “The screen must not be disturbed, sir!”

“Certainly not,” said Singleton, in a low voice, “But—sentry—who is it dead?”

“Williams, the fore-castle man,” answered the sentry, “whom the fall happened to, sir.”

Singleton walked quietly away, with his heart beginning to beat strangely. He reached the bow-port, and sat down, and listened to the surging of the waters against the stem. The ship was sailing almost on the brilliant path of the moonlight, which stretched across the sea. A footway of sparkling gold, this, through the wide fields of ocean, and worthy (may we reverently fancy) of being trod by the feet of Him who walked upon the waters!

There was a melancholy scorn in Singleton's heart, as he thought of what he had just seen and heard. What a wretched mockery of honour! While this poor fellow was a living soul—a miracle, breathing the breath of God—contempt and contumely were his portion, and his fare was ignominy and the lash! But now that the soul was gone, and only its poor “shell” left—when the Temple was ruined and the Divinity away—the poor body received most wonderful attention and respect! It is a type of the justice of the world!

I wonder how often what is called reverence for the dead, is but a particular form of the poor survivor's fears of his own death? How often, I wonder, do we take for a ray of heaven, what is nothing but an *ignis fatuus* from the grave!

The ship was hove to next evening, for the burial. With all honour the corpse was laid across the gangway on a grating. Was it the same grating at which the man had been flogged a week before?

Singleton wondered if it was, as he stood and watched the ceremony. The chaplain was there, reading the sublime words; the officers were uncovered; a flag was spread over the remains till the last moment. And the scene

was lighted by all the splendour of the moon. All was silence, attention, and respect. Death had vindicated the sacredness of man. Satire has no place in such a scene ; and Singleton no longer felt scornful, but only sad. There was a rattle, and a hollow plunge, and the sea was in a moment silent, as became the grave.

“ Watch, make sail ! Main brace ! Main tack and sheet ! Haul away. Top-gallant studding-sails ready for setting ! ” Let us be off from the bubbling spot.

The “ Patagonian ” arrived at Malta on August 1st, 1840.

CHAPTER V.

"I do not see why there should be an Eastern question," said Hillel Besso, with an epigrammatic air.

TANCRED : or THE NEW CRUSADE.

ONE night after the arrival of the "Patagonian" in the Grand Harbour, a large party of naval, and a sprinkling of military men, were assembled in Mula's café, in the Strada Reale. It was the hottest period of the year. The door was opened wide, that the languid air might find a hearty welcome. When one has lived in hot climates, one begins to understand why the Greeks built a Temple of the Winds ; and when one begins to understand, one ceases to sneer. The room was papered in a very ugly style—in compliment to the English, who patronized it ! The designer of this graceful tapestry had evidently wished to flatter us, as

a sporting nation. It represented a stag-hunt. The huntsmen wore the orthodox top-boots, and carried huge whips. They were leaping high gates, and struggling in impassable fences. At one end was represented the catastrophe. A man with a large weapon was cutting the stag's throat ferociously.

The frequenters of the café were seated at neat little tables of mahogany—some of marble. Ices of all colours were much in vogue, pale lemon and rich red preponderating. A thin haze of cigar smoke curled in blue rings along the roof. Some gentlemen were sipping coffee, and some were colouring their lemonade with the aid of brandy.

“Indeed,” said Lord Clarion, in reply to a rather energetic sentence from a young officer, whose small, round waist was girt by a scarlet sash, which, falling over his brilliantly white trowsers, made his appearance somewhat picturesque. “You think these eastern difficulties will end in an European war?”

“Yes. All our fellows think so. Thiers is warlike by nature. There is a strong war party in France, and their fleet, I hear, was never in better order.”

“Ah! But there have been so many false war-alarms.”

"True. Yet there must be war some time, and this eastern question is a crisis."

"What is the eastern question?" asked a young artillery officer, somewhat affectedly.

"What, Charley, you want to puzzle us by the interrogatory plan? You must know, Clarion, he is a great theorist. He has a project for settling the eastern difficulty by making Lamartine King of Syria."

"And giving the kingdom of Greece to Ben D'Israeli," added the artillery officer, seriously. He was of a speculative turn, and had nothing to do all the year round, except occasionally to fire cannon at a target from Fort Ricasoli; so he dabbled in speculation with most singular results.

"Where is the Admiral?" asked Clarion.

"I believe he's *en route* to Alexandria. The Commodore's at Beyrout, in his ship, the 'Powerful,'" answered a lieutenant of the "Jupiter," a line-of-battle ship then in the harbour. "Suleiman Pasha's in command at Beyrout with ten thousand troops, and Ibrahim Pasha and the Emir Beschir are in the neighbourhood. We will all be off soon, depend on it. Won't there be fighting!"

"Fee-fa-fum!" cried Snigg, from a neighbouring table, where he had planted himself

with some brandy and water, "I smell the blood of an Egyptian man."

The military officer who had spoken first (Bechamel, of a regiment stationed in the island) looked round, rather haughtily, at these extraordinary sounds.

"Will you fight, Snigg?" asked Somers, who was smoking a cigar.

"I'll do anything if I am paid for it," answered Snigg, philosophically. "What a lot of our fellows will be killed in Syria without knowing what they are fighting about."

"We must put down Mehemet Ali," said a second master, looking round for applause.

"I should like to have one of his pipes," said a midshipman. "Will there be any plunder?"

Bechamel rose, and Lord Clarion went out with him. The remainder of the officers drew near each other, and went on talking about the squadron and the impending war. Snigg established himself with a number of youngsters round him. He delighted to be king among a group of admiring boys, to study their characters; and would even make them tipsy, that he might do so to advantage. Snigg had very good talents and qualities; but as the constant dropping of water will wear away

stone, what cannot a constant succession of drops of rum-and-water effect in the same way?

"I say Mehemet Ali must be put down," said the second master again, striking the table emphatically.

"Poor old gentleman," said Snigg, ironically; "What has he done?"

"He poisoned a man with coffee, once," said the second master.

"By Jove I think Mula has been taking a hint from him then," said Snigg, "for his coffee is execrable. Do you hear that, Mula? Bring me some lemonade, and a little brandy in it; or, on second thoughts, Mula, never mind the lemonade. Bring the brandy by itself." A general laugh followed this characteristic speech.

"Well, I shall be sorry to leave Malta," said Box, pensively.

"Malta's an interesting island," said Lovell, with a spoony look.

"St. Paul was shipwrecked here," added the second master, with an erudite air.

"Yes," struck in Snigg, brandishing his spoon; "and almost the first things he came across were a bundle of sticks with a viper inside them—doosed emblematic of the society!" And Snigg laughed cheerfully.

“Did you ever dine with the Capuchins?” asked Somers of Lovell.

“No.”

“Ah, then you have a treat to come, if they choose to ask you. They give the best feeds in the island.”

“What an excellent body of men!” said Snigg, piously.

At this moment there was a new arrival. It was a midshipman belonging to one of the ships in the harbour. He had his sword on, and he appeared somewhat flurried. Glancing hastily round the room, his eye lighted on Somers. He bowed.

“You belong to the ‘Patagonian,’ I believe?”

“Yes,” said Somers.

“The steamer has come in from Alexandria with dispatches. There has been a signal made to you from the Palace to prepare for sea.”

Three or four of the “Patagonian’s” fellows jumped up; the midshipman only waited to swallow some wine and water, and then hastened away.

“I suppose we had better go on board, eh?” said Somers, looking round.

“She can’t sail till the morning, surely.”

"Mula, how's the wind?" cried out Snigg, with a thick voice. Come here, waiter,—how's the wind, eh?"

"How I know, sar?" asked the waiter, a dignified Maltese, sharply.

"Silence, *zanzir*,"* said Snigg, who had been out on the Mediterranean station before, and knew just enough Maltese to be able to abuse the natives a little.

"We can't sail without wind," said Snigg, looking round, stupidly.

"There is a steamer in the harbour. She will tow us out."

"We had better go," said Lovell, rising and putting on his cap.

"Come along, Silenus," said Somers to Snigg.

"Silenus always had an ass with him, so I will go with you," returned Snigg, who was never without a retort.

"Let us have some beccaficos and champagne," cried Hillerton, of the "Jupiter," coming in. He had just won five pounds at billiards in Strada Forni, and was in high good humour.

"I will join you," said a little fellow, called Pug Welby. "You poor Patagonians are going to sea; I pity you."

* Pig.

"*Partant pour la Syrie*," sang out Hillerton, gaily.

"Ah," said Pug Welby. "War is a bore."

"Thank God, the 'Jupiter' sails very fast, and can run away if need be," said Hillerton, facetiously.

The Patagonians dared stay no longer, so they all sallied out, and passing down Strada San Giovanni, and so on down Nix Mangiare, and through the Lascaris', soon reached a boat and went off. At daylight the "Patagonian" was towed out. The wind was westerly, and she started for Syria.

The "Patagonian" went to take her share in that war which terminated in the reduction of Mehemet Ali to his obedience to the Sublime Porte ; or, in other words, in the submission of the greatest man that the East has produced since Solyman the Magnificent, to the sway of an effete Government. If hero-worship be true, it was false, and unless human nature change, it will be regretted.

From 1806, when Mehemet won by his genius the Pashalik of Egypt, to the year in which this war was perpetrated, the country developed and improved, as only countries do under the supreme dominion of a great man.

Gravity is not more decidedly the one mighty law of the physical, than the influence of individual character is of the moral world. No matter what the age or the circumstances. It was a man that made Russia an empire ; and a man that made Prussia a camp. Artificial as is the mechanism of the British Constitution, England at its best periods has always been governed by some one great individual. I need only mention the name of Cromwell : but look at the last century. In its palmiest years, was it not the name and brain of Chatham that ruled England—three estates and all ?

To Egypt, Mehemet Ali was a second Nile ! He had certainly some terrible work to do. He came down—as Mr. Carlyle finely says of Cromwell—“like the hammer of Thor.” How he destroyed the Mamelukes, all men know. But though the East is proverbially the land of roses, nothing greater can be accomplished with rosewater there than elsewhere !

The Porte watched his progress. They saw his revenues increasing. Improvement suggested nothing to them but increased Tribute, and the Sultan demanded more “purses” with the coolness of a highwayman. Alas for the “Asian Mystery.” The East is an enchanted

land only in romance. We find on inquiring into its politics, often nothing better than dull imitations of European cunning and meanness. We find ourselves face to face with Downing Street in a turban, windbags smoking a chibouque, and snobs dominant in a divan.

Mehemet seized Syria and probably might have seized Stamboul. But now the "balance of power" required that the allies should take up the cause of the Porte. What is this balance of power? It is neutralisation of power! It is a propping up of two swords against each other, making both useless. It is an organized impotence. It keeps the East compulsorily stagnant, by preventing its development through the agency of such men as Mehemet. This Libra of the political zodiac, in fact, is a coward's farce. It creates the difficulty of which its supporters are everywhere begging the solution. Well, Mehemet Ali was checked in 1840. What has been gained by it? Syria has gained nothing, and most certainly not Egypt. And how stands the great question, that of Russia's position with regard to the Porte? Does or does not the day draw nearer, which shall see the eagle floating on the Bosphorus, and when a Slavonian shall blaspheme Mahomet in the proudest of his temples?

In 1840, we went vigorously to work. It was a grand, Common-place Crusade. We had marines eating beef in Sidon, and we inundated Lebanon with second-hand Birmingham muskets. We frightened merchants, destroyed mulberry trees, and killed camels. The Syrian war is the most memorable example of the employment of brute force, and the triumph of sheer material strength, that modern times can furnish. A sad want of dignity attends its history. Its operations were complicated by discordant orders, disgraced by petty jealousies between the commanders, and chronicled in dispatches redolent of slang. In a word, we did not conquer the great Pasha, we *thrashed* him.

I do not admire the plan of disposing of the East "on the allotment system" as it may be called, propounded by Louis Blanc in his "Ten Years." But when I think of some of our political operations, I heartily concur with that celebrated writer, in his contempt for those, who, as he says, (with a point worthy of Rochefoucauld) "think that they are practical, because they are mediocre."

And now to resume my story,

. . nunc horrentia Martis !

as friend Virgil hath it.

CHAPTER VI.

Bellum scripturus sum————

SALLUST. *Bell. Jug.*

“LAND, ahead,” cried the look-out man just after daylight, one morning.

“Mr. Fontenoy, go up to the masthead, and take a look at it,” said Lieutenant Primby.

Fontenoy seized his Dollond, hung it round him by the strap, and rushed away forward. Lord Clarion, who had charge of the fore-castle in the same watch, was regaling himself with a cup of ship’s cocoa on the booms. And he might have had a worse beverage at that hour.

“Ah, good morning, Fontenoy,” he said. “You will have the first peep at Syria.” Fontenoy skipped up the Jacob’s ladder, and was soon running up the fore-rigging. When

he reached the cross-trees, he found the look-out man comfortably seated on the fore-top-sail yard, with his legs dangling down.

"There's land, sir," said the man, pointing forward to the horizon. Singleton rested the glass on the yard in as convenient a position as he could command. Yes!—there was land, sure enough. A line of white mountains, barren and stony, was rising out of the blue horizon like an enchanted castle. Lebanon, by Jove! And the sun was tinging its summit as he rose too. Singleton took a long, deep glance at it, and thought of Lalla Rookh.

"That's land, sir, eh?" said the look-out man.

"No mistake about that," said Singleton, gaily. So saying, he put the glass over his neck again, and with an impulse of playfulness (for it was a delicious morning, and his blood was as lively as the quicksilver in a thermometer) he got on the foot-rope of the yard, and leaning over it, gazed far over the horizon. Day was dawning, clearer and clearer, over the sea, which was rolling in long, unbroken blue waves. The wind was setting in towards the coast, and the ship was running steadily along before it with the yards square. Singleton bent over the yard.

The fore-top-sail bellied steadily out underneath him, and the reef-points on it were dangling as merrily in the wind as a girl's ringlets!

Perhaps it was this fancy that completed Singleton's happiness. More gaily than ever he moved out towards the yard-arm, and gazed abstractedly before him once more.

In a few moments he felt the top-gallant-sail shake, and heard the boatswain's mate's pipe ring shrilly on deck.

"Hold on, sir," cried the look-out man suddenly. Singleton's heart gave a desperate throb, as he felt the yard start. The braces were in motion, as the sails were being trimmed. Singleton did hold on with desperate tenacity. The look-out man bellowed to the people on deck. The braces were made fast for a moment, and my hero "laid in," and got upon the topmast-rigging with remarkable alacrity. The ideal tendencies are confoundedly dangerous aloft!

He came down on deck, and reported to Primby, who laughed at the adventure which he had just had, and offered him some coffee. Primby always had a good "watch-stock" in his watch, and one night, when he was in the "Pelham," in the West Indies, he gave a kind

of supper to the fellows in his watch at about two o'clock in the morning, which terminated curiously enough. The tray was placed near the hatchway, well covered with provisions, and they were all pitching into them when a noise was heard which made them start like the mice in Horace's fable :—

. . . quum subito ingens
Valvarum strepitus lectis excussit utrumque.*

In fact, the admiral, that great man, Sir Booby Booring, was astir! In a minute or two they heard his step on the companion-ladder, as he hobbled up. There was nothing for it; they tilted the tray over the combings of the hatchway! It thundered down below, smashing the china plates with the mess-arms on them, and all the apparatus of that feast. When the admiral reached the deck, he found the officers of the watch walking about in the most regular manner.

At four bells (six o'clock,) Captain Pannikin emerged from his cabin, enveloped in a huge blue pilot-coat; he nodded sulkily in return to Primby's salute.

“ Lash up hammocks, Mr. Primby.”

The order was given, and the men began to

* SAT. LIB. ii. 6.

“take up their beds and walk,” as Mr. Bagg, the boatswain, who was a profane old rascal, used to shout out to them. As the “Patagonian” drew near the land, the Bay of Beyrout was seen swarming with vessels. Up went the “Patagonian’s” number, and shortly afterwards she saluted the Commodore, whose blue burgee floated from the “Powerful.” The signal officer was on the fore-castle, when three balls were seen flying up to the “Powerful’s” mast-head. They broke, and as the grub bursts into a butterfly, broke into bright flags!

“Bring the signal-book,” shouted Lovell, who was signal-officer. The man came running up with it. Captain Pannikin stood by, anxiously.

“Well, Mr. Lovell?”

Lovell gave a long thirsty look.—“3—2—”

“Well, sir, well?”

“Reconnoitre,” cried Lovell. — Captain Pannikin was intensely excited.

“Sail to windward,” shouted the look-out-man.

“Fleet to windward!” cried Lovell almost at the same moment, interpreting the bright symbols.

The captain stamped on the deck with rage.

“By G—it’s too bad. Call down the look-

out man and put him in irons ; we ought to have seen them half-an-hour ago.—Turn the hands up !”

Out came Mr. Bagg’s call. Mr. Bagg had been too long at sea to be excited at anything, so as he saw the captain go fuming aft, he only winked his eye, and muttered something about “ a bear with a sore head.” Then his pipe thrilled the decks, and the hatches began to vomit up the men,—it is not a pleasant metaphor, but it hits the thing,—with the utmost violence.

In came the studding-sails. The “ Patagonian” hauled her wind, which was now rising fast, and laid her head towards the horizon. Again the vision of Beyrout began to grow dim, but what a sight there was to windward ! Like the spires of a great town seen from some distant spot, rose tall masts from the sea !

Now, at this time, a war with France was daily expected. The French had a squadron of some ^{eleven} ~~twenty~~ ships, not far from Beyrout. Had they descended as enemies on that bay, ten days before Beyrout was attacked, and our force landed, they would have found an enemy only a third of their number. What would have been the result ? This I will say, that if any man living could have fought them

under such circumstances, Commodore Napier was that man. But I decline to speculate any further!

Captain Pannikin, of course, not knowing what this fleet was, thought it safest to clear for action, and gave the order with a great deal of gusto. Indeed, there can be no doubt, that he would not have stuck for an instant, at bombarding any thing that ever floated, from Noah's Ark down to the Gomer.

But as the "Patagonian" drew nearer with all her men at quarters, and the guns loaded, Pannikin armed with his sword, to say nothing of Fontenoy with his dirk, which was not the least imposing spectacle of the day!—the fleet turned out to be gallant old Stopford with his reinforcement, and some Turkish ships. The order was given to "secure the guns," which the men did with some grumbling, particularly as old Bertie, mate of the lower deck, had, under pretence that there was going to be a desperate action, thrown overboard a quantity of their plates and furniture which took up an unnecessary degree of room!

The "Patagonian" exchanged signals, and bore up once more for Beyrout with the new squadron. What a magnificent spectacle

was. There went the stately "Princess Charlotte," leading the way like a queen! Lofty line-of-battle ships attended her like barons bold. The Turkish ships with the crescent flying, and their gaudy sterns shining in the sunlight, sailed steadily along in company. And there was also near, the graceful and brilliant corvette "Dido," as beautiful as a Nereid, worthy to have borne Cleopatra,—a fairy of the sea! For, of the creations of Sir William Symonds, this must be admitted, (whatever be denied) that Ocean never bore more beautiful vessels. No man with a spark of fancy but must be charmed with his beautiful brigs, particularly, whether in calm, they glide along the surface, sweetly and tranquilly as the nautilus,—or in storm, dashing through the waters, they recall the flight of the dove, that bore the olive-leaf of old!

In the afternoon, the squadron anchored in the Bay of Beyrout, and exchanged salutes. How black and funereal looked the old castle; how sunny the distant Lebanon! The country was gay with colour. It seemed as though it had gained by a charm the power of the prism, and split every ray from that glorious sun into separate gorgeous hues. The bay was exquisitely calm. And prettily lay among

the large ships, fishing-boats of the coast with their long yards and high prows.

“ Mr. Fontenoy, do you see that line-of-battle ship lying inside, with her broadside on to the town ?” said Commander Modell, about three o’clock.

“ What, the dirty one, sir ?” said Singleton, ingenuously.

Modell laughed. “ Hush, Mr. Fontenoy; you speak too plainly, young gentleman. Remember, midshipmen and youngsters are never allowed to express opinions. You have no right to think.”

Singleton looked up in surprise, and grinned.

“ Go on board her, sir,” said Modell, with a severe look, “ to copy an order.”

Away went Singleton in the first cutter, and reached the line-of-battle ship in question. She was a dirty one, beyond the possibility of doubt, and Singleton, as he went on board, wondered whether her officers were allowed to smell, or whether that sense was *défendu*, as well as common sense generally. He found a number of youngsters assembled at a wooden table on her main-deck, copying an order into their order-books. There was a most deficient supply of pens and ink, and a lively conversation going on, besides, so that the said

copying was no easy operation. Singleton secured a stump of pen, however, and by dint of dipping over a midshipman's shoulder, and prodding him in the right ear, now and then, by accident, got a little ink, and began the task.

"I say," said a fellow from the "Ganges," "the marines land to-night."

"Do they, though; what fun!"

"We've got lots of shells ready," said a little boy, from a war-steamer. "We'll give it them!" The speaker could not have lifted a thirty-two pound shot if he had been offered its weight in gold.

"I've got such a beautiful nargilly," said a youngster, looking up from his writing, which he appeared to find an arduous task.

"What, a hubble-bubble?" said another, using the more familiar name.

"Yes. The Turk I bought it of says it belonged to a Pasha."

"Very likely," said a midshipman, rather drily.

"It's hard to draw!" said the youngster, with a touching sigh.

"How the blazes do you spell 'precipitate?'" asked an Irish youngster, eagerly, which caused a general laugh. Here, the

officer of the watch sent down to the main-deck, for these gentlemen to make less noise.

Singleton having copied the order, went on deck, and ordered his boat to be called alongside. While waiting for it, he saw a figure emerge from the cabin, under the poop. There was a sensation on deck, and my hero perceived, at once, that the figure was that of a Great Man.

He was dressed in a rather seedy uniform, and had an awkward stoop. His face was eccentric, but expressed power. He crossed his hands behind his back, and began to pace the deck, with a gait that was as remarkable as everything else about him. It was Benbow, with a dash of Grimaldi!

The "Patagonian's" cutter was just coming alongside for Fontenoy, when a small gig shot between her and the ship's side. A young man about twenty ran up, and came on deck. He was in the uniform of a mate, but had a straw hat on, with the word "Viper" upon the black ribbon, in gold letters. His face was most remarkable for its grave beauty, its serenity, and its power; and Singleton felt an interest awakened by him, such as he had not experienced for many a long day. His eye dwelt upon him anxiously, as he accosted the

officer of the watch. He perceived, that though what he said influenced that gentleman obviously, yet that some difficulty prevented their conversation from being satisfactory.

“Who is he—what does he want?” asked the Great Man, stopping abruptly, and taking a pinch of snuff.

“Officer from the brig ‘Viper,’ sir,” said the lieutenant of the watch, touching his hat, “come to speak about the stores for the Alexandrian squadron.” The Great Man fixed his eye on him, looked at him, from top to toe, inquiringly, and then said in his peculiar accent,—

“Wall, sir—what is it? Speak oot.”

The young man bowed very formally and gracefully.

“I have the honour, Sir,” he said, “to bear a message from my Commander,—Commander Tinsley of the ‘Viper.’ He desires me, most respectfully, to submit, that the size of the vessel makes it impossible for us to carry the stores in question. We have not room, sir.” Here the young man bowed again, and Singleton thought he had never seen so much manly courtesy, or so fine a bearing.

The Great Man very deliberately pulled out his snuff box, supplied his nose, and powdered

his coat as usual. Then he looked again at the speaker, from top to toe, inquiringly, and spoke as follows :—

“ Wall, Sir. Ye will go baack to the ‘Viper,’ and ye will see Commander Tinsley, and ye will tall him ye have seen me. And ye will tall him that I oerder him to take these stores on board ! And ye wull tall him, that if he has no got room in the lower deck, he must put them on the upper deck ; and that if he has no got room on the upper deck, he must fill his cabin with them. And he must stow them in bulk in the cot where he sleeps. For I am daammed” (this was said with a wonderful broad effect) “ if they shall not go ! ”

As he concluded, the Great Man glanced to see the effect this speech had on some of his crew, who were gathered near the main-bitts. For he was not above courting popularity in various ways, this Great Man !

The young officer of the “Viper” bowed,—as pleasantly as if he had been bowing in a ball-room,—in reply to this address, and moved to the gangway to regain his boat. Singleton was near there, as he passed, and was again impressed by his face. It had so much serenity and power.

They were near each other, for a moment.

Perhaps it was the curiosity in Singleton's intellectual countenance that arrested the stranger's attention. He looked at him earnestly. Singleton felt impelled to speak to him. The man who has never experienced that impulse by which we seek the friendship of a stranger from some undefinable attraction—as inexplicable as the influence of flowers or stars, yet quite as certain—is himself a stranger to true friendship, and still ignorant of the alphabet of God!

“That was a strange speech you have just heard,” said Singleton, as the stranger paused an instant on the gangway.

The Stranger looked at him. “Do you see my boat? It has an ensign in it. It is a piece of vulgar, ragged bunting—but all the world honours it. Such is the force of symbols!”

He spoke, and ran rapidly down, and sprang into his gig. In a moment, she was skimming away.

Singleton followed, and presently gained his ship. A signal had made all the squadron alert. The marines were in heavy marching order, and it was known that a landing was to be effected. The town swarmed with soldiers, whose heads peeped every now and then

out, in various places, and the gleam of whose bayonets shone occasionally behind wall and rock.

Evening was coming on. The purple twilight was coming. The air began to grow fresher and sweeter. There was a rolling sound—a volume of white smoke. The “Cyclops” was beginning to throw shells! Hissing through the air went the shells—death sleeping within them, till his proper hour. On rough rocks—on fresh green patches, such as the camel loves—on walls—and amidst green trees—fell the shells. The Arnaut is fierce; but who can stand against the fatal ball that has a terrible death sleeping in its bosom, as poison lies in a cup?

Dusk came on. The marines, and heavy, swarthy Turkish troops embarked on board the steamers. There was a cape of land to the south-west. The brilliant “Dido” glided in, very fair and very terrible, within a few hundred yards of the rocks; with her, the little “Wasp,” small, but deadly as a scorpion.

Dusk became night. Lebanon retired behind the veil of darkness, and was no longer seen. The lofty figures of the men-of-war looked gloomier and gloomier; but here and there gleamed lanterns, just as you can fancy fire-flies gleaming in a cypress grove.

Slowly rose the moon—a well of gold in the heavenly desert! The light fell everywhere. It enamelled the old castle; it rested like a smile on the face of the sleeping town. It made the rocks of the cape visible, and there were seen the enemy gathering on it, and taking up a position, to resist the landing that was to take place when to-morrow's sun rose.

Day came. The enemy were intrenched on the cape. The steamers, loaded with soldiers, were near it, and hovering ready to send them to the attack. The fleet weighed, and spreading out, as a huge bird spreads its wings, formed a line.

The “Benbow” drew in to the cape, and began to throw shells. The enemy clustered behind rocks and walls. The shells fell in among them, and scattered destruction everywhere. Death was playing at Proteus. There was slaughter everywhere. But still they rallied; still they prepared to resist a landing.

Suddenly up flies a signal! Away go the steamers with their load of marines! Away goes the “Castor,”—away goes the splendid “Pique,” brilliant “Dido,” deadly “Wasp!” The blue bay gleams with the white sails of the flying ships—and the wind carries the seeds of death elsewhere. 'Tis the catastrophe

of Camacho's Wedding over again. "A miracle—a miracle! No; a stratagem—a stratagem!"

Without opposition, by this device, the forces were safely landed at Djouni and Dog River, and the English flag hoisted on Lebanon.

In the evening, the "Patagonian's" mess were discussing the events of the last twenty-four hours, and the prospects of the war.

"It was certainly ingenious to persuade the enemy that we were going to land on that cape, and then to dart across the bay, eh?" said Somers.

"Not much in it," growled Bertie.

"'Twas a happy feint," said Lovell, with his spoony look.

"It was a capital dodge," shouted Box.

"It was an admirable stratagem," said Toadley, who admired everything done by the authorities, and who would eat any amount of dirt, provided it was served in gold or china.

"Box has defined it best," said Lord Clarion, looking up from a recent number of "Blackwood's Magazine;" "it was a capital *dodge*!"

END OF VOL. I.





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